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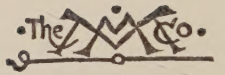
THE FRONTIER SPIRIT IN AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY



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THE FRONTIER SPIRIT IN AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY

BY

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TO
MY PARENTS
IN GRATEFUL MEMORY
OF THEIR
INTEREST IN BOOKS AND
DEVOTION TO RELIGION

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PREFACE

It is more than a quarter of a century since Professor Frederick J. Turner, addressing the American Historical Association, in Chicago, called attention to "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." The seeds of this suggestive paper, with those of later studies published by the same author and appearing in a recent volume (1920) bearing the same title, fell upon good ground. During the intervening years much has been done by students of political and social history both in teaching and writing, to give larger recognition to the fascinating story of the trek of American civilization from the Alleghenies to the Pacific. It has come to be generally recognized that the frontier not only provides an element of romance which may be used to greatly stimulate enthusiasm for the study of American history, but that at important stages in the career of our nation, frontier reactions and influences supply the only true understanding to the course of events.

In respect of the American frontier, church history has scarcely kept pace with its social and political history. Few studies of the church have presented the romance of missionary enterprise in the new settlements of the West. Nor has any interpretation of American Christianity taken serious cognizance of the influence of the frontier in giving to it its distinctive characteristics.

The writer has felt the challenge to the latter task. The studies embraced in this volume are committed, especially to students of American religious history, in the hope that they may serve as a stimulus to much investigative work that remains to be done before any final

interpretations may be safely formulated. Much of the literature that needs to be studied before our frontier religious history is thoroughly understood, lies obscured and unknown in the attics of the homes of church pioneers who are rapidly passing away. Much, unfortunately, has been destroyed. Too great haste cannot be made to accumulate surviving records in convenient centres in order that the work of investigation may be carried forward. It should be added, however, that the interpretations presented by the writer in these studies rest upon a study of a considerable body of source material accessible in the various libraries of Chicago and adjoining districts. He has also been greatly indebted to the courtesy of librarians in many of our small colleges throughout the Middle West, who have entrusted to him valuable local church history material.

Some claim for serious consideration of the interpretations suggested in this volume may be made on the ground that in the course of teaching they have all been submitted to several classes of mature graduate students of history. The freest criticism has been invited in the lecture room. Questions raised in the process of discussion have been carefully weighed and many suggestions have been acted upon. However, the writer will find his most satisfying reward for the work embraced in this volume not so much in the verification of conclusions that he has ventured to set forth, as in the quickened enthusiasm for the collection and study of the literature relating to church life upon the frontier.

The section dealing with Revivalism (Chapter III) appeared in *The Journal of Religion* (Vol. I, No. 4), to the editor of which, appreciative acknowledgment is made for the permission of republication.

Peter G. Mode

The Divinity School of the
University of Chicago
July 12, 1923

THE FRONTIER SPIRIT IN AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY

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CHAPTER I

THE AMERICANIZING OF CHRISTIANITY

Through the course of the centuries Christianity, as a product and expression of life, has manifested a keen sensitiveness to its environment. In adjusting itself to varied and changing surroundings it has assumed from time to time corresponding variations of type. Even during the same period and within the bounds of a single civilization, its manifestation frequently has been far from uniform. So striking indeed is this fact of variation that a recent exposition of Christian origins has ventured to resolve the basic element in Christianity into a "developmental" capacity to adjust itself to and react upon its surrounding. Its essence is to be found [1] not "in some static quantity of experience, doctrine, conduct or ritual derived from certain privileged periods of the past, but in the power by which persons worked out their religious problems in immediate contact with their several worlds of reality, the process being renewed in the experience of each new generation."

In Palestinian environment, conceived and expounded by a Galilean, whose thought horizon and thought forms were Jewish, and among disciples dominated by Messianic expectations, the New Faith was launched as a propaganda essentially Jewish. Nurtured under the shadow of the Temple, it indeed came perilously near being absorbed

[1] Case, "The Evolution of Early Christianity," pp. 2, 25.

into Judaism, being rescued therefrom only by the timely decision of the apostle Paul to carry his evangel far out into the Graeco-Roman world. It was there that broader contacts emancipated him from the legalistic, ceremonial emphasis of the Jerusalem apostles, and made him the uncompromising exponent of Christian freedom. Stimulated by the vigorous intellectualism of surviving Hellenism, it was not long before Christianity was seeking to define its religious conception, to draw inferences from its definitions, and from these definitions and inferences to construct systems of theology. In the philosophic atmosphere of the Graeco-Roman civilization, Christianity was impelled to the elaboration of a Christian theology, and the acceptance of approved theological opinions rather than conformity to distinctive moral ideals became the badge of Christian profession. Moreover the prevailing syncretism of Hellenism imported an elaborate ceremonial into the simplicity of Christian worship. Its sacraments assumed the form of mysteries. In short, in a civilization still impregnated with Hellenism, Christianity itself was *Hellenized.*

In like fashion this impressionable young Christian religion responded to the characteristically Roman spirit of the civilization of a later age. In establishing churches throughout the bounds of the Empire, Christian leaders could not fail to observe and to be impressed with the wonderfully efficient system of organization by which a vast array of Roman provinces and dioceses, administered through an elaborate gradation of imperial officials, was held in firm allegiance and cohesion. It came to pass, therefore, that appropriating Roman methods of governmental administration, Christian churches soon had their discipline, their laws and councils, their parishes, dioceses and provinces, their bishops, archbishops, and patriarchs. That is to say, in imbibing from the Empire its institutional genius, Christianity was *Romanized.*

An outstanding feature in Roman civilization was the

principle of centralized government. Rome aspired to dominate the habitable earth through an emperor exercising unlimited authority. In an atmosphere so highly imperialistic it was natural that Christianity should dream of ecclesiastical world-dominion, and that her bishops at Jerusalem, Constantinople, Alexandria, Carthage and Rome, should refuse to reconcile themselves to coördinated authority. The need was felt for an ecclesiastical as for a political imperialism. In due time, therefore, the Bishop of Rome laid claim to the guardianship of Peter's keys. Thus in the imperial environment of Roman civilization, Christianity itself became *imperialized*.

Amid the commotions of barbarian encroachments, when the See of Peter at times provided the sole anchorage of authority, an imperialistic conception of Christianity grew in vigor and popular esteem. Later the Carlovingian policy of rehabilitating the Roman Empire only served to make the Papacy bolder in its imperialistic claim and more tenacious of its prerogatives and jealous of encroachments. In the new feudal structure of society that superseded Roman civilization, not only did the Church conform to feudal principles of property holding, but through the Pope's assertion over the emperors of Germany of the rights of spiritual overlordship, Christianity eventually found itself thoroughly *feudalized*.

Meanwhile a new impulse had begun to stir the peoples of Western Europe—the spirit of Nationalism. Emerging at a moment obscure to the historian and impelled by forces equally mysterious, its manifestation was seen in rivalries of trade, in contested territorial rights, in the Avignon domicile of the Papacy, in strife within the cardinalate, in programs of Reforming Councils, and in protest of church reformers. Wyclif, Huss, Grossetête, Luther, and others popularly known as Bible translators, expositors of evangelical ideals and advocates of church reform, were first and foremost nationalists, each remonstrating against the Papal burden imposed upon his fellow-

citizens. The *motif* of the Reformation was nationalism. And though in certain respects a disappointment, the Reformation did not fail to realize its primary objective of demolishing the structure of an imperialized Roman ecclesiasticism. Out from the storm of thoroughly aroused national indignation there emerged through the protests of the Reformation a *nationalized* form of Christianity.

No longer dominated by Rome, since Reformation times the newly established national churches of Western Europe have been taking on more and more the outstanding characteristics of their environment and reflecting with growing faithfulness the ideals, temperament and traditions of the national life of which they form a part. In at least several countries of Europe, Protestantism, while resting upon a common fundamental basis of theology, has assumed clearly defined distinctive types. Its expression, for instance, in Germany is widely different from that of England, and even in Britain, where there has been so much in common between the religious histories of England and Scotland, the manifestations of Protestantism have been quite distinct. Nor is nationalism reflected only in Protestantism. Romanism itself has clear lines of demarcation within national boundaries. Catholicism in Spain and Central Europe renders servile obedience to Papal behests, while French Catholicism, true to its Gallican history, survives in its defiant strength. The Papacy has refrained from establishing a diplomatic representative in London though so represented in various continental capitals.[2]

Colonized during the period in which nationalized Christianity was coming into expression, America, like Scotland, England, France, Germany, and other western European lands, has been evolving its own characteristic type of Christianity. The appreciative response of a

[2] Following the advice of Cardinal Manning, who understood the temperament of his fellow-citizens. See Thureau-Dangin, "The English Catholic Revival in the Nineteenth Century," Vol. II, p. 380.

British audience to American preaching forcibly demonstrates that the Britisher finds in the content and presentation of the American sermon something which, while in evangelical essentials like his own, in other particulars offers a pleasing contrast. That outstanding American congregations frequently have turned to England and Scotland for ministers bears witness to this same consciousness of distinctiveness in the respective types of American and British religious leadership. The fact, moreover, that the pastorate of these imported ministers rarely extends over a long period of years is even more conclusive evidence of the essentially indigenous character of British and American religious life. When the glamour of distant fields has faded out and the religious *entente cordiale* has had sufficient time for expression, congregations and ministers alike seem to realize that in the temperament and methods of their respective constituencies there are differences which, while not fundamental, are likely to make the long pastorate uncongenial and ineffective. This applies, of course, even more forcibly to the religious life of continental Europe. Greatly indebted as is American Christianity to Germany and France, notably through contributions of scholarship, a moment's reflection suggests that if America, Germany and France were able to brush aside the impediments of differing languages, there would still remain in temperament, interests and ways of work an almost insuperable barrier to an interchange of Protestant religious leaders.

That American civilization in evolving distinctive social and political features has at the same time been creating a church life of its own is not to be regarded as at all surprising. Indeed it could not be otherwise. The process is analogous to that which among other peoples produced variant types of Protestantism, a process based first upon the developmental genius of Christianity to adapt itself to an environment in the modern world just as spontaneously and irresistibly as in the ancient and

mediaeval, and secondly, upon the existence in America of an environment unlike, in some particulars at least, that of any preceding European civilization. American religious life could have been the exact reduplication of some European type only if Christianity had lost its development savor of responding to surroundings, or if in this western hemisphere, it had found itself environed amid surroundings that in every particular were only a transplanting from European soil. But the salt of Christianity has not lost its savor, nor has civilization in America spent itself in the process of merely reproducing the civilization of Europe.

What, then, are the outstanding factors in American life that have induced the Americanizing of its Christianity? Racial homogeneity has played no part. In the long process of biological evolution the racial American has yet to emerge. English, Scotch, Irish, Scandinavians, Germans, Italians, Jews, and others, have been bearing the responsibility of American citizenship and proudly acclaiming the virtues of their adopted land,—Americanized in varying degree by legal process, by successive generation on American soil, and by the force of natural surroundings and social institutions, but not by the fusion of an intermarriage that has received the conventional approval of the American people at large. The foreign quarters of our large cities and the segregated foreign-speaking communities both witness to the serious fact that the intermarriage of fellow-citizens in America who themselves or in their ancestry were racially or politically separated in Europe has as yet made little progress.

The causes, to be sure, are not far to see—the superficial teaching of Americanism, the deep rootage of European prejudices, the straitened circumstances of the newly emigrated, the divisive influence of differing languages, and the conditions that still in ill-regulated, mushroom-expanding cities and boundless frontier areas have proved so favorable to geographical isolation. With the removal,

by and by, of these opposing factors and the rise of a public sentiment favorable to the intermarriage of all sections of our people, there will emerge the real American. Up to the present the American temperament and Americanism have been the product of social and physical environment unaided by racial blending. American Christianity has therefore no racial coloring and its Americanization as yet has been a process void of racialism. To one conversant with the influence that racialism has exerted upon the unfolding of Christianity, this fact has considerable interest. It will be recalled that the Greek and Latin churches have found reunion impossible largely because of fundamental racial differences. Among the Teutonic peoples the Renaissance was a movement widely different from what it was in Italy and France. Among the people of southern Gaul, racially blended from so many streams, the efflorescence of Christianity had a beauty and fragrance all its own. And when America, similarly enriched in its life by peoples drawn from many climes, shall have passed through its corresponding process of racial fusion, there undoubtedly will emerge in its religious life features that reflect the influence of its racial individuality. As yet, however, the Americanization of Christianity has not progressed that far. It has to await its biological opportunity.

A factor that has played almost as negligible a rôle as racialism in this process of Americanizing our religious life is nationalism. Late in its awakening, the national consciousness of America has rarely been vigorous. Compared with the spirit of contemporary European people, it has been fitful, if not anaemic. Most of the early colonial groups regarded themselves as detached only geographically from their respective motherlands. They continued to look upon themselves as citizens of the land from which they had removed. Their life, moreover, as pioneer citizens was hard and engrossing. With many of them it was the supreme and almost exclusive concern to set up

worship according to their own ideals and to perpetuate their cherished religious views. To settlements other than their own they gave little if any thought. Their life, though deeply religious, was self-centered. Moreover, if they had been disposed to cultivate common group interests, geographical distances and poor lines of communication would have imposed heavy handicaps. For a considerable time their reading material came from across the seas. Current events of interest were transatlantic rather than colonial. The Great Awakening seems to have been the first occurrence sufficiently powerful and widespread to arrest the attention and concentrate the thinking of the scattered colonial settlers. Later came the intolerable claims of Britain, the protest of deeply grieved Royalists, the Declaration of Independence, the victories of the battlefield, and the framing of the Constitution. At last the colonies had passed into nationhood—and yet with a sense of nationalism long impaired through the conflicting claims of federal and state rights, handicapped by the Washingtonian principle of non-interference, and compelled to battle with the sectional irresponsible tendencies of frontier life.

The Americanizing of Christianity has been a process, therefore, into which the spirit of nationalism has been at most only slightly injected. Not having been environed in a vigorous nationalistic atmosphere, American religious life lacked one of the strongest impulses toward the establishment of a state church. From the outset it was incapable of developing anything corresponding to Gallicanism or Anglicanism. It is true, of course, that in the case of Virginia, colonialism (the planting of colonies for national advantage) was strong enough to transplant almost unimpaired the European parish, while in Massachusetts and Connecticut much the same system was evolved by the "New England Way of the Churches." The establishment of the parish was not slow to produce irritation and hardships at times becoming veritable persecution.

And it was this persecution that in the calm atmosphere of the new world set men thinking upon the true nature of religion and of the church. To a few discerning spirits, it became clear that an established church invariably imposes hardships upon the individual conscience and militates against a spiritual conception of religion. Peopled with such a large proportion of refugees to whom religion had meant much sacrifice, and presenting ample unoccupied areas as an asylum for all types of creeds, the colonies soon provided a following for prophets of a new church-state order. They became the battleground of Baptists and Presbyterians who contended against a privileged church establishment until at length a century of agitation, controversy, and intermittent persecution culminated in the Constitutional Amendment by which civil disabilities for religious affiliations were entirely removed.

The establishment of a free church in a free state has had a determinative influence upon American institutions and seems destined to fill an epochal place in the development of modern civilization no less than of Christianity itself. It might seem, therefore, as if the Americanizing of Christianity resolves itself into the struggle by which established churches were bereft of their vested privileges, and the later process by which all churches with the same status in the state have been learning how to depend upon their own resources, and to recognize, vie and coöperate with each other. It is upon this conception of what is basic in American religious life that most of the work of American church historians has rested. It has inspired the valuable monographs of Philip Schaff and Sanford H. Cobb.[3] It accounts for the voluminous and constantly increasing literature bearing upon the New England theocracy. It justifies the hero worship that attaches to the

[3] The writer has in mind "Church and State in the United States or The American Idea of Religious Liberty and Its Practical Effects with Official Documents," by Philip Schaff, and "The Rise of Religious Liberty in America—A History," by Sanford H. Cobb.

names of Roger Williams, Cecilius Calvert and William Penn. It explains a martyrology of Baptists and Quakers. It has continued to supply fuel for the controversy as to whether Maryland or Rhode Island was the earliest experiment in religious toleration.[4] Even in recent years it has challenged several investigators to study anew the religious struggle of Virginia and the relative contribution of Baptists and Presbyterians to the cause of church disestablishment.[5]

Although nineteenth-century American religious history abounds in neglected incidents and movements, it is to earlier periods already worked over with so much thoroughness that investigative interest persists in turning. Reappraisals emerge or controversies are reopened, while notable contributions of the church to the upbuilding of American nationhood are entirely ignored or dismissed with a few dull generalities. An eminent historian of Congregationalism gives as much attention to the Halfway Covenant, the Reforming Synod, witchcraft, the Saybrook Platform, and related intervening events as to the far flung extension of Congregationalism during the whole national period.[6] A standard history of the Baptists devotes more space to Roger Williams, John Clarke, Henry Dunster, and the organization of the earliest New England Baptist churches than to the activities of the whole Baptist body in the period 1814-1894.[7] This same disproportion of emphasis upon the rise and early struggle of Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians and Lutherans appears in the outstanding histories of these bodies.[8] A "History of American Christianity" by Professor Bacon, alone among

[4] This literature is indicated in the author's "Sourcebook for American Church History," p. 114.

[5] See author's "Sourcebook," p. 281.

[6] See Walker, "History of the Congregational Churches in the United States," Chaps. IV, VII and X.

[7] See Newman, "A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States," pp. 59 to 162, 379 to 484.

[8] See the corresponding volumes of the American Church History Series.

studies of American religious life, seems to recognize that contact with frontier life has been one of the outstanding features of the American church. This work takes considerable pains to interpret the problems thrust upon the churches of the early nineteenth century because of the rapid and large colonization of the Middle West, and to indicate the policies by which the several denominations set their hands to the great task of Christianizing the frontier.[9] The author, however, does not seem to realize that frontier contact was more than a critical phase in the development of the American churches. Hence at the most he attributes to its influence only an incidental importance. The struggles for religious freedom during the colonial period remain with him as with so many other writers a cardinal point of interest in American religious history.

A much clearer insight into what constitutes the Americanizing of Christianity is to be gained by realizing that our civilization thus far has been largely the civilization of a frontier. Frontier contact has been more than an incident. It is the one unifying feature in all the vicissitudes of our national development. For more than a hundred years, our fathers themselves were frontiersmen or in constant contact with the men of the West. Indeed, the earliest settlers of colonial days looked upon themselves as frontiersmen Notwithstanding the hardships and the tedious length of the Atlantic voyage, they did not view themselves as detached from the motherland. Thrust out far across the sea, they regarded themselves as in a transatlantic frontier building up the outposts of an expanding empire. They were not slow, moreover, to exercise the freedom of removing whenever they chose into the immense hinterland that lay at their doors.[10] The

[9] See Chapters XIII, XVIII, and XXI.

[10] Professor Turner has ably set this forth in his study on "The First Official Frontier of the Massachusetts Bay," reprinted in "The Frontier in American History," Chap. II.

plaintive strains of the Reforming Synod show that within a generation after its founding, New England was already beginning to feel the materialistic blight of frontier land appropriation.

Among the evils enumerated by this Reforming Synod, Clause X reads as follows: "There hath been in many professors an insatiable desire after Land and worldly Accomodations, yea, so as to forsake Churches and Ordinances, and to live like Heathen, only that so they might have Elbow-room enough in the world. Farms and merchandising have been preferred before the things of God. In this respect, the Interest of New-England seemeth to be changed. We differ from other out-goings of our Nation, in that it was not any worldly consideration that brought our Fathers into this wilderness, but Religion, even that so they might build a sanctuary to the Lords Name, Whenas now, Religion is made subservient unto worldly Interests. . . . Wherefore, we cannot but solemnly bear witness against that practice of setling Plantations without any Ministry, amongst them, which is to prefer the world before the Gospel. . . . Moreover, that many are under the prevailing power of the sin of worldliness is evident." [11] Cotton Mather writing a few years later bears similar testimony.[12]

For more than one hundred and fifty years the almost inexhaustible resources of our plains and mountain areas have been keeping American society in a state of constant fluidity,[13] and during the long process in which successive generations have been possessing themselves of the unappropriated domain of the interior, their character has been undergoing a transformation in harmony with the markedly contrasted environment of the frontier.

[11] See author's "Sourcebook," p. 88.

[12] See Turner, "The Frontier in American History," p. 64.

[13] This story is told by Winsor in "The Westward Movement, the Colonies and the Republic West of the Alleghenies, 1763-1798," and by Turner in the "Rise of the New West."

The typical American of today is the embodiment of those qualities of mind and heart that have been produced by decades of contact with the isolation, perils and rapid material shiftings of the frontier.[14] As yet, the process of Americanization has not become an intelligently directed system of education. It is little more than the influence of frontier environment upon a succession of generations which quite unconsciously have acquired certain marked characteristics, such notably as buoyancy, generosity, directness, and resourcefulness. Americanization thus far in our history resolves itself largely into *frontierization*.

Nor has our religious life stood apart from the process. It could not have done so had it tried. However alarmed the fathers of the seventeenth century were over the "insatiable desire after Land and worldly Accomodations" it was their sons and daughters, removed by a few generations, who first as adventurous individuals and families, and later almost as entire communities, moved into the receding frontier to there establish their homes. From that moment the churches of the colonies were confronted with the problem that was to grow into large and expanding proportions. Theirs it was to provide first of all their own children with the means of grace, and later to see to it that a rapidly rising civilization of the West was to be equipped with Christian institutions and nurtured in Christian ideals. Such a task was to mean to the constituency of the colonial churches much adjustment and radical change. Vast organizations had to be built up and perfected as the medium for arousing and utilizing the sense of spiritual responsibility; methods had to change in the face of unprecedented emergencies; sectarian sensitiveness had to give way to interdenominational comity and coöperation. All this was a part of the gigantic enterprise to which American Christianity set its hand when it undertook to Christianize its frontier.

[14] In his study on "The Frontier in American History," Turner has brought this out clearly. See Chapters V-IX.

Nor was this all. The spirit of the frontier was to imprint itself upon the type of religious life imported into its borders by the herculean missionary effort of the East. True to its developmental genius, the Christianity of the frontier was to gradually take on the characteristics of its new environment.

As the frontier stages of civilization begin to pass, American Christianity finds itself vastly changed from what it was before our fathers began to move toward the West. And the changes effected in it during the period are what today give distinguishing characteristics to American religious life.

It follows, therefore, that the Americanizing of Christianity has been the process by which it has been *frontierized*. Succeeding chapters will attempt to set forth the salient features of this process.

CHAPTER II

THE ENLARGEMENT OF MISSIONARY HORIZON

From the beginnings of American colonization Englishmen may be credited with having felt some sense of moral and spiritual responsibility toward the natives whom they were destined to gradually dispossess. The Royal Charters disposing of territories later known as Virginia, Massachusetts Bay, the Carolinas, Rhode Island and Pennsylvania set forth with considerable prominence and emphasis the obligation of the several patentees to evangelize the savages.[1] 'Tis true, of course, that mere conventionalism may be partially responsible for this reiterated requirement. Possibly, indeed, it was sometimes inserted to camouflage the intended exploitation of the helpless natives. Nevertheless it is to be recalled that the antecedent colonizing efforts of Spain, Portugal and France had been conducted almost invariably under the auspices of the Church. Priests and especially those of the Jesuit order had been accustomed to accompany colonizing expeditions. Englishmen, as the proponents of the Protestant faith, may naturally have been solicitous to show as high a regard for the propagating of religion as had the Catholics of continental countries. Rulers, moreover, especially those of Spain and Portugal, were accustomed in those days to regard themselves as the wardens of the natives, and as such set apart for their defense

[1] The exact phrasing of these commissions relating to Indian evangelization may be consulted in McDonald, "Select Charters," Documents 1, 8, 12, 26, 27, 28.

against the cruelty and spoliations of the colonists. The best friend of the helpless savage sometimes proved to be the emperor who ruled his people at home with an iron hand.[2] It was, therefore, in harmony with the prevailing attitude of continental dynasties, when English sovereigns saw to it that in granting charters they put themselves on record as the protectors and spiritual benefactors of the Indians. It is gratifying, moreover, to discover that the royal coiners of pious phraseology occasionally themselves rendered a service to some missionary cause. Charles II saved the charter of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel from being revoked, and its vested properties from being appropriated by grafters. His grandfather James was an enthusiastic patron of an Indian school in Virginia.

This institution was the earliest expression of the interest shown by Englishmen in the well-being of the American savage. Designed to give lads of seven years and younger a knowledge of Christian principles, youths from twelve to twenty-one an acquaintance with a trade, and a selected few of matured years a training for missionary service among their fellow-tribesmen, under the capable leadership of Copeland, and with the coöperation of the planters in giving home instruction to Indian boys, this school bade fair to become an almost ideal prototype of constructive missionary effort when the prejudice and malice of the Indians themselves wantonly destroyed it beyond recovery during the disastrous massacre of 1622.[3]

Absorbed in the shaping of theocratic laws and creeds, in controversy and enforcing of discipline, the Puritans around Massachusetts Bay lost sight of their spiritual duty

[2] A missionary of long experience in Bolivia informs the writer that the natives of South America, while rankling under the memory of the cruel oppression of Spanish adventurers, cherish to this day a kindly feeling toward the Spanish rulers who they believe served as their protectors, saving them from an otherwise more inhuman colonizing policy.

[3] Details may be found in Flory, "The University of Henrico," Publications of the Southern Historical Association, Vol. VIII, pp. 40-56.

to the red man until John Eliot made full amends in his long career of unstinted service. The translating of the Scriptures, primers, catechisms and devotional books, the formulating of an Indian grammar, the establishment of schools and of a college at Cambridge, the grouping of thousands of Indians in village communities, the organizing and superintending of Indian churches with the training of native teachers and the enlistment in England through the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel of a wide and generous patronage of Indian missions are a few of the remarkable achievements of this justly venerated "Apostle of the Indians." A reputable contemporary reporting conditions among the Indians in 1674 estimates that the number of praying Indians in the vicinity of Boston was at least eleven hundred.[4] In Martha's Vineyard a harvest almost as abundant was reaped by the Mayhews.[5] At Marshpee, under the inspiration and counsel of Eliot, Richard Bourne established an Indian community with vigorous schools where scores of church members were baptized.[6] In the vicinity of Cape Cod Samuel Treat ministered to several Indian congregations numbering approximately half a thousand, while near Sandwich, Thomas Topper cared for a company half as large.[7] In Connecticut and Rhode Island the pastors at Banford and Norwich faithfully sowed Gospel seed among the Mohegans, though results were somewhat disappointing.[8]

The eighteenth century witnessed developments in other quarters. Among the Housatunnuk Indians, John Sargeant, a student and tutor at Yale, removed their dwellings to a more healthful location. Eliot-like, he mastered their language, translated portions of the Scriptures, and pro-

[4] Gookin, "Historical Collections of the Indians in New England," Collections Massachusetts Historical Society, Series I, Vol. I, p. 195.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 204, 205.
[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 195, 199.
[7] Brown, "History of Missions," p. 68.
[8] Gookin, as above, pp. 208-209.

jected an academy for the training of girls as well as boys. Disappointed in a general response to an appeal for financial support, but assisted through the generosity of William Hollis, he was partially able to realize his ambition of establishing a charity school where provision was made for teaching a dozen of Indian lads. About the same time, Eleazar Wheelock, with a similar plan of education, through the benefaction of Joshua Moor, launched a charity school which, surmounting difficulties of finance and troubled war conditions, steadily enlarged its usefulness, until attracting the attention of wealthy donors, it developed into Dartmouth College.

Contemporary with Sargeant and Wheelock was David Brainerd who first at Kaunameek, near Albany, and later at the Forks of the Delaware, passed through weary days of unpromising seed sowing, made the more depressing through loneliness and ill health, until at length at Crosweekung a Pentecostal awakening abundantly satisfied the travail of his soul. More than a hundred transformed converts were left to mourn the untimely death of their saintly though youthful father in Christ.

A mission among the Oneidas initiated in 1766 by Samuel Kirkland assisted by missionaries from the Wheelock School, after the dark days of the Revolutionary War entered upon prosperous times, so that at the close of the century it was ministering to more than six hundred Indians. Not far removed from the Oneida mission, the Jesuits conducted for many years under the guise of Christian evangelization, a clever propaganda to detach the Five Nation Indians from their allegiance to the English Crown, and to secure them as allies of France. At the urgent solicitation of the Governor of New York, missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel were detailed from time to time to neutralize this Jesuit intrigue.[9] But it was a task that does not seem

[9] "Ecclesiastical Records of the State of New York," Vol. II, pp. 1171-74, 1358-61, 1367, 1375, 1426.

to have created much enthusiasm among the missionaries themselves and repeatedly they had to be goaded to it by the remonstrance and appeal of colonial officials and public-spirited citizens. At no time does anything approaching a mission among these Five Nation Indians seem to have been established.

Having emigrated to America for the avowed purpose of furthering the cause of world evangelization, the Moravians, not unnaturally, threw themselves wholeheartedly into the task of Christianizing the Indians. Not to mention the brief effort among the Crees of Georgia, there was their highly successful mission at Shammokin in New York State, conducted by Christian Rausch and his associates. Under the stress of war, Gnadenhutten next became the base of operations with excursions to the Six Nations at Onandago. Later removals to the Blue Mountians, to Friedenshutten on the Susquehanna, and under the intrepid Zeisberger, to the Muskingum, carried the Gospel into the very heart of the red man's stronghold where even the cold-blooded massacre of fourscore converts failed to shatter the constancy of Indian Christian faith. Driven about from pillar to post, these resolute converts finally settled at Fairfield, in Canada, and at Goshen on the Muskingum, from which by the close of the eighteenth century they were pushing out mission extensions among adjoining tribes.

The Quakers were also deeply interested in the savage. In his "Exhortation to Friends in America," George Fox repeatedly urged the spiritual claims of the Indian. In his travels from Rhode Island through Maryland and the Carolinas, he did not fail to preach to the natives when opportunity arose.[10] Among the apostles of George Fox one of the earliest to minister to the Indians was Josiah

[10] "Journal of George Fox," Cambridge Edition, 1911, Vol. II, pp. 224, 229, 236; John Burnyeat tells of his having heard Fox preach a five hour sermon to the Indians of Maryland. "Writings of John Burnyeat," p. 60.

Cole, who as early as 1638 held a meeting at Martha's Vineyard. John Taylor bears testimony that there were also Indian converts on Long Island.[11] William Penn, famed for the justness of his dealings with the Indians, also frequently expressed in exhortations to fellow-friends a deep interest in their spiritual welfare.[12] The Journals of outstanding Quakers—John Richards, Thomas Story, Thomas Chalkley, John Woolman—bear witness to a missionary zeal that carried the Christian evangel hundreds of miles into the western bounds of Pennsylvania and even to the Ohio.[13]

From the facts as shown in the above sketch, that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, several widely separated and independently initiated efforts were made looking toward Indian evangelization, it might seem correct to conclude that a deep and growing sense of spiritual responsibility toward the Indian had seized the colonial churches. This conclusion, however, is unwarranted. Indian missions under Eliot and the Mayhews struck a stride that was not sustained in their later marches. The first twenty-five years of work in New England under Eliot produced results out of all proportion to those of equally lengthy later periods. With names other than those of Eliot and the Mayhews, Indian evangelization is not so much a record of achievement as one of splendid devotion on the part of missionaries who toiled on single-handed and unappreciated. It is not at all certain that their efforts among the Indians were effective even in developing a sympathetic missionary constituency in the churches. The evidence indeed rather points in the opposite direction. At the outset the financial burden connected with this enterprise was carried almost exclusively by the Corporation for Propagating the Gospel in New England under the benevolent and capable supervision of Robert

[11] Kelsey, "Friends and the Indians," pp. 23-24.
[12] "Conduct of Friends, 1844," pp. 55-56.
[13] Kelsey, "Friends and the Indians," pp. 25-33.

Boyle. Later (1701) The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge assumed considerable responsibility, and in lesser degree the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts. A few Boston churches may have made contributions.[14] Wheelock received some donations for his charity school from colonial settlers, but the bulk of his support came from Britain. Sargeant was compelled to abandon a projected academy because friends in England failed to provide adequate funds. Sustenance from the New England colonies does not seem to have been so much as contemplated. Brainerd's support also was drawn from across the sea.

After the initial struggles connected with establishing their homes and setting up their government, and while they still felt the religious quickening of their enterprise of faith, the settlers as a whole throughout New England seem to have felt some genuine concern for the spiritual interests of the savage. Romance also may have played its part. So did a chivalrous sense of justice to those whom they were dispossessing of their hunting ground. Fear, moreover, was a factor. Unless a savage was civilized, it was recognized that he was liable at any moment to swoop down and extinguish the white man's settlements. This accounts for the marvellously advanced social and industrial program connected with some of the earliest Indian missions. From the outset the savage, far from being merely catechized in the Christian faith, was trained in agriculture and the crafts.[15]

[14] In 1718 five churches raised £483 Sterling for preaching the gospel "on the border" (Neal, "The History of New England," Vol. I, p. 283). Whether these churches had established the precedent of annual or even periodic contributions does not appear. The Massachusetts Bay Court made substantial provision for the education of Indian boys, the building of an Indian college, printing the Bible, tools and wool (Gookin, "Historical Collection of the Indians in New England," Collections Massachusetts Historical Society, Series I, Vol. I, p. 213).

[15] Gookin, "Historical Collection of the Indians in New England," Collections Massachusetts Historical Society, Series I, Vol. I, pp. 287 f.

But it was not long before changes affected the whole situation. Materialism wrought deadening influences upon the churches, paralyzing the finer spiritual sense of missionary obligation. The savage with his paint and curious garb ceased to arouse curiosity and compassion. His rights to streams and hunting grounds raised little compunction. He was found to be hopelessly slothful and improvident, bitterly resentful and slow to forget a wrong. He tenaciously refused to entrust to the missionary the educational control of his child. He proved hard to convert and when converted seldom made a good citizen. Some of the colonists, therefore, who at the outset were genuinely interested, gradually lost heart in trying to evangelize folks that gave such small promise of being able to assimilate Christian ideals. A larger number, never moved by the spiritual benightedness of the children of the forest, found in their meager responsiveness to Christian civilization additional reason for indifference to all redemptive effort on their behalf.

Another factor that made it difficult to sustain the earlier enthusiasm for Indian missions was the diminishing contact of the older communities with the savage. At first, contacts were of almost daily occurrence. The settlers were constantly reminded of how their community was a rude and probably unjust encroachment upon the preserve of others. But by and by the tribesmen were seen less frequently. They had betaken themselves to haunts less subject to intrusion, and only the more reflective and spiritually minded colonists were likely to cherish a deep sense of obligation toward those whose distant retreat into the wilderness betokened comparative immunity from attack. Brainerd and Sargeant, Cammerhof and Heckelwelder, Chalkley and Woolman went far in search of the retreating tribes, but the loneliness that enveloped their journeyings is a pitiable symbol of how indifferent the settlers generally had become to the poor pagans by that time far removed into the interior.

The history of colonial Indian evangelization undoubtedly would have been vastly different if from its inception more financial responsibility had been placed upon the churches and individual colonists. However well-intentioned, the promoters of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel followed a decidedly shortsighted policy in not attaching reasonable conditions to the outflow of their contributions. The founders of Massachusetts Bay Colony were abundantly able almost from the moment of their landing, and certainly within the course of a few years, to have amply provided for John Eliot and his successors. From failure at this point a missionary constituency failed to be created and developed within the colonial churches. Consequently the history of Indian Missions in the colonial period becomes an anticlimax with its finest chapter at the beginning. From time to time burning spiritual fervor inspired self-effacing men like Brainerd to immure themselves in barbarian surroundings. Yet little remains as the meed of their sacrifice save the conversion of small Indian groups and the after-glow of their saintly memory.

As the colonial period, however, drew towards its close an important change occurred in the relations between the colonists and the Indians. Contact with the retreating Indian was reëstablished. From the older settled regions long since abandoned by the red man, the more adventurous settlers began to push into Kentucky, Tennessee, western Pennsylvania and Ohio—the retreat which the Indians stood ready to desperately defend against the insatiable land hunger of his pale-faced intruder. Hence the burning of cabins, the capture of wives and children and the scalping of unwary travelers and planters. Life on the frontier became an unceasing vigil against the stealth of the Indian war band. "Back home" parents, brothers, sisters and friends were racked with anxiety as they thought of their loved ones who at any moment were liable to fall as victims in the next visitation of the

savage. The block-house, of course, offered some security, and an occasional military expedition with stern reprisals struck terror for a time into the marauders. More thoughtful people, however, were quick to perceive that the surest way of dealing with the Indian's menace was not through military offensive but by his conversion to Christian ideals of conduct. Let him be disarmed by the peaceful principles of the Nazarene, they reasoned. Frontier contact with its dangers for the new settlers suddenly created a new argument for the christianization of the Indian.

About this time, moreover, Britain was being stirred by the romantic story of a cobbler who used to pray for distant peoples as he mended shoes and who finally succeeded in establishing a mission at Serampore. Missionary organizations soon followed—the Baptist, Church, and London Missionary Societies. Through seaports captains were not slow to communicate to strategic American churches the impressive developments of Carey's enterprise. Religious periodicals—the *Arminian Magazine*, the *Evangelical Magazine*, the *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine*, and the *Panoplist*—placed before the Christian constituency of New England and the Middle States, the aims and achievements of the British Societies. The result was an awakened interest throughout America in the evangelization of the world.[16] A Call to Prayer for Missions issued in 1794 led to the formation two years later of the New York Missionary Society which in its *Introductory Address* to its American constituency gave clear expression to a sense of obligation of engaging in the task of world-evangelization:

"Events have recently occurred which deeply interest every genuine Christian. We learn from sources most

[16] Dr. Ashbel Green has this to say, "Your Societies have done good by the influence of their example as well as by the direct exertions to spread the gospel which they have originated. By your zeal we have undoubtedly been stirred up." *Evangelical Magazine*, April, 1799, p. 172.

direct and authentic that exertions of vigor are now making beyond the Atlantic for extending the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. A spirit of jealousy for His name not less decisive than universal actuates our brethren in Britain. Its influence was first felt by the faithful around the metropolis; and the impulse has vibrated to the extremes of the Isle . . . Large Societies founded on evangelical principles and embracing various denominations have already been formed and are rapidly forming for the purpose of propagating the Gospel among the unhappy heathen. With the magnanimity worthy of Christians, they have sacrificed the bigotries of party on the altar of apostolic zeal. To the East, to the South, to the West their ardent eye directs its attention; unwilling to restrict their efforts to their own immediate connections, it is their noble design if possible to produce 'a general movement of the Church upon earth.' It was their generous piety which gave rise to the New York Missionary Society. It is to solicit your coöperation in the same glorious work that the Society now addresses you, and surely, brethren, there are considerations which should prompt us to follow without delay their example. . . . That in Messiah 'All the families of the earth shall be blessed' is yet the subject of promise."

In Massachusetts, Connecticut and Berkshire, Societies were stirred by the appalling facts of the world's spiritual destitution. Correspondence carried on with the London Missionary Society indicates that probably without exception all the Missionary Societies of the colonies regarded their program as a part of one common enterprise in Europe and America to christianize the whole world.[17]

Instead, however, of proceeding immediately to send missionaries to the uttermost parts of the earth and of thus coöperating with the British Societies, their thought

[17] See *The Evangelical Magazine*, III, pp. 35, 301; IV, p. 28; V, p. 327; VI, pp. 227, 291. *The Connecticut Evangelical Magazine*, II, p. 310; IV, p. 192; V, pp. 74, 148, 295.

turned first to the heathen at the door. The evangelization of the Indian loomed up with a dignity and imperativeness such as it had not commanded in colonial days. In setting forth their aims before the Christian public the older Societies in particular gave precedence to this task of caring for the needs of the savage. Almost invariably the *Address* to their constituents issued by these organizations enlarged upon the urgencies of giving the Gospel to the Indian. References to the moral and religious destitution of the frontier settler were thrown into the later portions of the document, obviously suggesting that this aspect of the appeal was regarded as less compelling or of secondary importance.

As a consequence, missionary operations among the Indians, abandoned from the causes already indicated,[18] or suspended because of the complications of the Revolutionary War, were revived around the opening of the nineteenth century upon a larger and more vigorous scale. Under the direction of the Connecticut Missionary Society, David Bacon journeyed to the Straits of the Mackinac, while Joseph Badger interested himself in the tribes of the Sandusky region. Other missionaries employed by the New York, New Hampshire, and Berkshire Societies, though less far removed into the interior labored no less diligently. Not since the days of Eliot had Indian evangelization enjoyed such hearty and general support. But enthusiasm proved ephemeral. Unexpected discouragement soon loomed up. To secure Indian interpreters was difficult and almost impossible. Valuable time seemed wasted in the missionary's mastery of the Indian vernacular. Indian parents showed the same disinclination as in colonial times to commit their boys to schools where they might be trained as missionaries to their fellow-tribesmen. Appropriations were made by various societies for thus educating Indian lads, but the monies went a-begging for candidates. Nor did the christianized

[18] See pp. 22, 23.

natives seem capable of readily imbibing the thrifty industrial habits of the white man.

Meanwhile new settlers were pouring into the West, where they found themselves cut off from the religious facilities which they had enjoyed in the communities of their youth. Parents, neighbors and church members thought of those who had gone to the frontier as subject to peculiarly trying temptations, spiritually hungry and lonely, largely because that in their new environment they lacked the ministry of the church. The sentimental bonds between the older and new communities soon proved stronger than the sense of obligation of a higher to a lower developed race. Although the Executive Committees of Missionary Societies continued more or less conventionally to press the claims of the Indian upon their constituencies, they nevertheless proceeded to multiply the number of missionaries to the frontiersmen with no corresponding addition to the staff of missionaries among the Indians. And so from the forefront of missionary effort and achievement, the work of christianizing the Indian, in the course of a few years, passed into the background, surviving only as the forlorn cause of the idealistically disposed.

The rapid multiplication in the first few years of the nineteenth century of Female and Cent Societies, was a factor that further helped to shorten the transition period between Indian and frontier evangelization. However responsive to the spiritual needs of pagans across the seas and in the forests of the hinterland, mothers and sisters naturally were very much more moved as they thought of their boys and sweethearts braving the dangers, privations and loneliness of the frontier outposts. These Societies, therefore, multiplied rapidly, thereby providing an additional sentimental bond between the old and new communities, strengthening the argument for caring adequately for the moral and spiritual needs of the new settlers.

The transition from an effort to evangelize the Indian

to that of ministering to new settlers was both pronounced and rapid. In an anniversary sermon preached (1803) before the Trustees of the Connecticut Missionary Society, Rev. Elijah Waterman felt called upon to devote himself to a discussion of the objections that were then being raised against the attempt to propagate the Gospel among the Indians.[19] In their annual reports the directors of the several Missionary Societies began to hint that possibly Indian evangelization was doomed to failure. They cheerily insisted that God in some way would visit the poor savage with salvation, yet they frankly admitted that at most his conversion was a work of faith. A letter addressed by the Directors of the Connecticut Missionary Society to the London Missionary Society shows that by 1804 it had come to be felt that charity was most consistent when extended to the new settlers rather than to the Indians; that souls of white men were no less precious than those of the savage; and that there was more immediate obligation on the part of the white man to those of his own race than to others.[20] In the reports of subsequent years references to work among the Indians become less and less detailed. Sometimes a *quasi* apology appears for so little effort among the savages; sometimes there is a gallant hope that more will soon be effected; occasionally the subject is passed over without the slightest reference and the reader is left to assume that the whole energies of the Society were being concentrated upon ministering to the new settlers.

It was during this period that Samuel Mills passed through the early stages of his religious experience. Born in a State preëminent for its pioneer Missionary Society, converted in one of a series of highly emotional revivals, with a mother who had oft talked to him of Eliot and Brainerd and consecrated him to the service of God as a missionary, and with a father who as a minister had

[19] *The Connecticut Evangelical Magazine*, IV, p. 27 f.
[20] *Evangelical Magazine*, British edition, May 1804, p. 328.

played his part in the home missionary work of Vermont, with access to the *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* that kept before its readers the operations of the London Missionary Society and the awakening sense of missionary responsibility in various sections of western Europe, it is small wonder that young Mills far exceeded his mother's prayers by dedicating himself to missionary work in a foreign land. Even less surprising is it that a few years later a group of college men in this same atmosphere of frontier evangelization, organized a Society "to effect in the persons of its members a mission or missions to the heathen." [21] Such a development in missionary effort was inevitable. Sooner or later America, stirred as Europe over the spiritual destitution of the world, was bound to do more than merely send monies to support the missions of non-American organizations. And that time could not be long deferred, since from so many districts missionaries "in person" had been pushing far into the interior upon the kindred enterprise of evangelizing their fellow-countrymen. For years the religious urgencies of the frontier had been weaning the churches of the East from a parochial interpretation of the Kingdom of God; it had been training them to contribute not only monies and missionary supplies but also to send from their own homes missionaries to the outposts of the West. What the Haystack group did was simply to further enlarge the missionary horizon of the churches from the frontier to the uttermost bounds of the habitable earth. It also related their training in frontier *personal* missionary contact to the wider relationships of world needs.

At first blush it may seem strange that when the young men of the Haystack group communicated their mission plan to their college professors and Associational ministerial leaders, no attempt was made to belittle it as the dream of youthful enthusiasm. The fact is that these young men could not be classed as visionaries inasmuch

[21] For Constitution, see author's "Sourcebook," p. 370.

as they were simply seeking an extension of the enterprise in which for years their seniors had been engaged. Hence the spontaneity which characterized the organization of the various denominational agencies for conducting missions abroad. The constituency of American churches seemed to be waiting for a larger missionary arena, ready to send their evangels to India and elsewhere, just as for years they had been commissioning them to the frontier. They had been brought into this condition of readiness for a world missionary program not so much by reading the transatlantic reports of Carey's work and by contributing in a small way to maintain this mission but by themselves engaging on the frontier in what was essentially a foreign missionary enterprise. Had Indian evangelization continued to be the chief interest of the churches, some sense of world responsibility possibly would have emerged. At best, however, this would have been the development of years. There was an aloofness and an element of condescension in the work of evangelizing the red man which operated against its educative value. Frontier christianization brought home to the churches, as work among the Indians never could, the significance of the Gospel as a constructive factor in civilization. No less did it show what a powerful basic factor the missionary was in the building up of a new society.

It thus appears that from its earliest stages the settlement of the frontier served as a training school in which East and West alike had brought home to them the world-horizon of missionary responsibility, and the constructive value of Christianity in the upbuilding of society.

It was reserved, however, for the next two generations, when the possibilities and problems of the undeveloped West began to be measurably appreciated, to elaborate a *rationale* of missions in which work at home and abroad was no longer viewed competitively but rather synthesized as a joint effort to establish a new Christian world-order. As little by little the horizon cleared, men of

insight in America began to comprehend the meaning of the movement of vast multitudes to its frontiers. First came the discovery as early as the third decade of the century, that the centre of dominion for America was fast moving to the West and that soon the strength of the nation would lie west of the Alleghenies. It was seen that in the course of the century the settlement in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys of probably a hundred million people was destined to play a decisive part in determining the character of American institutions. And in this ominous national movement, Christian leaders of the various denominations were not slow to perceive the urgent necessity devolving upon the churches to so enlarge their program of missionary operations as to make possible a thorough leavening of plastic frontier society with Christian ideals. Far from being impelled by a mere sentimental interest in the loneliness of backwoodsmen, or an evangelical passion for their conversion, missions loomed up suddenly as a strategic plan by which the West, and ultimately the whole nation, was to be saved from coarse immorality, materialism and agnosticism. The christianizing of the frontier was seen to be a duty of urgent national importance. A clergyman of the period, speaking before the annual assembly of the American Home Missionary Society, phrases this sentiment as follows:

"Every friend of his country as well as every friend of religion should therefore engage in this work. It is most obviously our wisdom, as well as our duty, to unite in the North and East, for planting the Gospel in the South and West. The strength of the nation lies beyond the Alleghenies. The centre of dominion is fast moving in that direction. The ruler of this country is growing up in the great Valley. Leave him without the Gospel and he will be a ruffian giant who will regard neither the decencies of civilization or the charities of religion. . . . It is impossible when we contemplate the Republic or the world

to overrate the importance of forming the rising character of our new States on the principles of the Gospel. When then we place ourselves on the top of the Allegheny, survey the immense valley beyond it, and consider that the character of its eighty or one hundred million inhabitants a century hence, will depend on the direction and impulse given to it now in its forming state; must not every Christian feel disposed to forego every party consideration and cordially unite with his fellow-Christian, to furnish them those means of intellectual and moral cultivation, of which they now stand in need, and for which they are constantly sending us their importunate petitions? And what we do we must do quickly." [22]

It was about this time, moreover, that the homogeneity of American civilization of the future was perceived in its sharp contrasts with the racially and nationally divided society of western Europe. The influence of Europe, it was realized, had been weakened by its lack of unity—its various languages, laws and traditions, its national antipathies and conflicts. America, on the contrary, was not only vaster in its resources and area; it could also be saved from Europe's divisions, and thereby become her "antagonist principle necessary to the full development of her own powers—a world destined to receive her overflowing population, to be the depository of her literature and laws, to expand her liberal principles and institutions, unrestricted by the prejudices and usages of former ages; and to be the heir of her influence over the human race." [23]

With such a prospect the christianization of the frontier became impressibly imperative. Christian publicists saw that the solemn task of the churches was to see to it that the unifying influence of religion was brought to bear

[22] *The Home Missionary Journal*, June, 1829, from an address by Rev. J. Van Vecten, pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church, Schenectady, New York.

[23] From an address by Rev. Charles Hodge, the *Home Missionary*, June 1, 1829.

upon the rising American society which, because of its eventual homogeneity was destined to so vastly surpass European civilization. Moreover, the impact of religion was a necessity of the immediate hour, not to be delayed until this new society forming in the West had passed beyond its formative period of infancy.

Professor Hodge, in an address before the American Home Missionary Society in 1829, thus expresses the missionary imperative created by the opportunity of making a homogeneous Christian civilization:

"The physical character of this country, its extent, its resources, and its facilities of communication within itself, and with the rest of the world, certainly place it on a par with Europe in all the elements of power. In other respects it has immensely the advantage. The influence of the Old World has been frittered away from the fact that it has never had Unity. It is an aggregate of nations of different usages, languages, laws and modes of thinking. . . . European power in passing into our hands comes to *one people*—the hundreds of millions which must one day inhabit this vast country will be one—having one language, one literature, essentially one religion and one common soul. This is unity which mere political divisions, should they unhappily occur, cannot destroy. . . . If we are to have this controlling influence on the destinies of other nations it is a question of unutterable importance what is to be the nature of this influence. If this country is to be the hotbed of infidelity and vice, then it will be the widest and most desolating curse the world has ever known; but if the Gospel is to form our character and guide our power, we shall be a fountain of life to all nations. The decision of this country, and of the countless millions who are to come after us involving not only the temporal and eternal welfare of our own children, but the welfare of all the millions over whom the direct or indirect influence of this country is hereafter to extend,

depends, under God mainly on the men of this generation. It depends on us. We live at the forming period of this great nation. We are now in our infancy. Now if ever our national character must be formed for God. Neglect the intellectual and moral culture of the individual in youth and you find it exceedingly difficult to mould his riper years. His character is fixed. The difficulty is far greater in nations because the field of operation is so much larger, and because they must themselves be brought to engage in a work for which, under the circumstances supposed, they will have no disposition. The population of this country is increasing with so much rapidity . . . that the work we have to do is appallingly great; and if neglected now, its accomplishment will be next to impossible in the generation which is to follow. Living then, as we do at this crisis of our country's history, the formation of our future character being to such an extent thrown on us, and this character being of such unutterable importance to the world, it may be questioned whether a generation ever lived on whose fidelity so much depended." [24]

Meanwhile the tide of European immigration continued to flow in increasing volume into the West. By the middle of the century it seemed that "a new order of things" was arising. Providence was "taking the work of human progress into its own hands. An era of missions had commenced not planned by man nor conducted on human principles—missions not of individuals but of nations, offshoots from the leading races, transplanted in such masses and with so much of the sap and vigor of their parent stock as to take root and gradually engross the soil." [25] Providence had thus set itself to the task of developing a race whose character should contain the elements calculated to make it an outstanding missionary

[24] The *Home Missionary*, June 1, 1829.

[25] From a communication of Milton Badger in the *Home Missionary*, June,1849.

people. And the Mississippi Valley, far removed from the strifes of Europe and large enough to cradle its millions, had been set by God as the stage for this process of race development. Thus viewed, it was the task of the churches to bring to a race slowly being evolved by God for a world mission, the knowledge and spirit of the Christian Gospel. Home missions, therefore, no longer survived as a rival of foreign missions. The enterprise of evangelizing America became in effect, and on a grand scale, a mission to all mankind.

The following bears the signatures of Milton Badger and Charles Hall, Secretaries of the Home Missionary Society:

"In this view of the enlarging sphere of American activity, may we not find some consoling explanation of the design of Providence in sending so many foreigners to our shores? As physical barriers are now so generally removed, and the whole world is coming into a condition of preparedness for receiving a Christian civilization, is it not probable that a race will be raised up for this world mission, whose character shall contain those selected elements which are most needful to make a complete missionary people? Let there be a mixture of the peculiarities of different races. For example: let the high resolve and energetic will of the Briton, which yields only to itself, with the wide and philanthropic scope of aspiration developed in our Pilgrim Fathers—form the basis of the combination. Add to this the reflection, discrimination and patience of the German mind, fruitful in the adaptation of means to ends. Let France add something, but Ireland more, of the fire of enthusiasm to quicken these elements into action. Thus would there be formed a *composite character,* more aggressive and efficient than either of the materials from which it is made up. But *where* could such a union take place? In Europe they cannot be separated from their present combinations, nor

is there a space there where they could commingle. There is nowhere a common receptacle into which they can be poured, but the broad expanse of our own Mississippi Valley. For such an end as this, it has been kept in reserve for so many ages. For this, the materials are gathering, and beginning to act upon and modify each other, just as that grand movement is commencing whose progress they will soon be wanting to assist.

In such a consideration of the uses which Providence is making of our country and our people, the duty assigned us becomes something more than merely to provide for a few hundred thousands, on the verge of the organized States. When the bearings of our work are justly considered, the distinction between Home and Foreign missions disappears. The enterprise of evangelizing this land becomes, in effect, and on a grand scale, a Mission to All Mankind." [26]

Two facts had considerable weight in strengthening this consciousness of an American world mission. The first was the acquisition by the government of the territory of Upper California, so large and so rich in harbors. It seemed significant that by this transfer the four coast lines of the two northern hemispheres should have passed into the control of the Protestant nations of England and America just at the moment when steam transportation was eliminating to such a large degree the remoteness of peoples the one from the other. It seemed that Providence was linking America with Asia and that through the mutual contacts of the people of America and of Asia, Christianity was destined to rapidly gain a foothold in the Orient.

"The growing ascendency of the English in China and the Asiatic Islands simultaneously with the transfer of

[26] See the *Home Missionary*, June, 1849.

California to our people completes the control of the four great coast lines of the Northern Hemisphere, by two Protestant nations, speaking the same language, and one in all the great features of their character. The bearing of this fact, coming to pass just as steam is giving ubiquity to commercial adventure, cannot but be direct and powerful on the conversion of the pagan tribes. And the circumstances that preceded and have followed our possession of California, show that herein a great trust is committed to us by Providence, for the benefit of a new empire, about to arise in the Pacific world. God kept that coast for a people of the Pilgrim blood; He would not permit any other to be fully developed there. The Spaniard came thither a hundred years before our fathers landed at Plymouth; but though he came for treasure, his eyes were holden that he should not find it. But in the fulness of time, when a Protestant people have been brought to this continent, and are nourished up to strength by the requisite training, God commits to their possession, that Western Shore." [27]

No less significance was attached to the military reverses that befell Britain during the first phases of the Crimean War. Strange as it may seem today, in the light of her wonderful imperialistic expansion during intervening years, Britain's humiliating experiences in the beginning of her struggle with Russia were interpreted in America as a portent of declining power. The great bulwark of European Protestantism appeared to be in the first stage of disintegration. America, as the twin defender of Protestantism and the joint instrument of God for His high purposes to mankind, was therefore about to be summoned to a correspondingly larger degree of responsibility. Britain no longer able to bear the heavier burden, America as larger in population and productive possibil-

[27] Correspondence in the *Home Missionary*, June, 1849.

ities, must be ready to assume the larger task. But only as a christianized nation could America intervene for the nation's healing. To take her place as the world's benefactor she must be good as well as rich. Her life must be transformed by the leaven of the Gospel. Missions therefore were indispensable in preparing America for her world mission by giving her a character that would make her influence wholesome in world civilization.

"Of the work performed by these two peoples (England and America) it seems apparent that the *greater part must fall to the share of America.* For America is fast becoming the larger of the two. . . . The nation that is to fill the great North American valley, and to occupy these Atlantic and Pacific shores, must eventually surpass in magnitude, any probable concentration upon the territories of Britain. In production also she must be superior, and the day will come when the yield of English mines and manufactories, in comparison with ours, shall be small as their harvests. America is to have a larger commerce, and likewise must become acquainted with a larger number of the earth's richest and most active inhabitants. And upon these busy and energetic spirits her influence promises to be even proportionately greater, since she is herself more free and of freer spirit. Her magnetic touch is destined yet to awaken, we trust, in many millions of souls the aspiration and capacities that have been slumbering through the long night of despotism and heathenism. . . . But in vain shall we become greater than England, if not also better. In vain do our frontiers extend, our productions multiply, our commerce, wealth, and power increase, unless the spirit of religion keeps pace with all this growth, and rules all these elements of influence. The heathen world will be none the better for the cultivation of our boundless prairies, unless Christian hands hold the plow, and Christian hearts consecrate the harvest. . . . The privilege of doing the larger half of the missionary

work will not be granted us unless we secure the thorough evangelization of that great West." [28]

Having arrived at a consciousness of American world-missionary responsibility, it did not take Christian leaders long to perceive that so great a task as that of evangelizing the world could not be performed by dividing the energies of the protagonists of Home and Foreign missions. The two must stand, or fall, together. It was in the West with its vast material resources that Christian stewardship would have the millions to consecrate to the establishment and maintenance of multiplying mission stations. It was there also in its vast constituency of churches that recruits would be found adequate to man these mission stations as they multiplied throughout the world. And it was in the West, moreover, that there would be the energy, enthusiasm, faith, and initiative adequate to meet the strain of evangelizing the world.

"The West is a part of the world, a part very necessary to those who wish to save the heathen;—we must have the West. Within the lifetime of a single generation, the contributions from that portion of our land must count not by tens but by hundreds of thousands, or its operations cannot be conducted with appropriate energy or tolerable success. Within the limits of a single generation, then, a large portion of those Western states must be made to become what New England is now (and if so much, then much more) a land of churches, and schools, and charities, of pious homes, and great religious enterprises. The world is to be converted at the West.

For years our missions had to struggle with difficulties, and in darkness like seeds in the ground, making no visible progress. But bye and bye, their hidden labors come to light, and then there must be a plentiful nourishment afforded them or they wilt and die. No one can tell how

[28] The *Home Missionary*, February, 1855.

soon China or even Japan may be begging at our doors for the Word of Life. . . . How can these demands be met? If we should be so far faithless to our own country and kindred, as to give only a feeble support to religion at home, so that throughout large regions it must maintain an ineffective war with the powers of darkness, then where is the spirit, and whence can the resources come that will carry on to successful results these costly foreign enterprises? Impossible! The church must be strong throughout America, or it will never be able to push its triumphs around the world. We need the West!

And not for money alone—*for men*. . . . The narrow East cannot supply them; the work is too great for our strength. But how and where shall there be strength equal to that day, if the resources of the populous West be not unlocked? There the great masses of our nation are to congregate, and there must the missionary host find results.

Besides—it may be a fancy, but it may prove a truth—is it not at the West that the American spirit is to find its freest, fullest, noblest development? May we not hope that if the work of home missions is thoroughly successful, a more beautiful and liberal Christian civilization shall rule there, and generations be born so *toned* in native temperament, and through the peculiar social atmosphere of that alert and vigorous race, as to furnish the most magnanimous, sympathetic, and enterprising missionaries that the church has ever found?" [29]

[29] The *Home Missionary*, February, 1855.

CHAPTER III

REVIVALISM

Revivalism has been one of the outstanding features of American Protestantism. Through it probably more than through any other channel, our evangelical Christianity has brought the impact of the Gospel to bear upon the problems of American society. In congested centers no less than in isolated farming communities, the normal procedure has been periodically to stage an elaborate evangelistic city campaign or the more unconventional "special meetings" in village or countryside. Hence the confusion that in many minds completely identifies evangelism with revivalism; hence also the difficulty that some good folk experience in conceiving of an evangelism that dispenses with a professional revivalist, and their conclusion that to question the merits of the revivalistic method is to betray an ominous lack of evangelical fervor. In all fairness it may as well be frankly admitted that the religious history of America in some measure at least justifies this way of thinking. For almost two hunded years it is revivalism more than any other phenomenon that has supplied the landmarks in our religious history—the undulations, upheavals, points of departure, and lines of continuity. It would not be difficult and by no means unsatisfactory to write the history of American Protestantism from the standpoint of its periodic awakenings. Such a treatment, of course, would pass lightly over the fine distinctions between Pilgrim and Puritan, the rigor of the Massachusetts Bay theocracy, the "Rhode Island experiment" of Roger Williams, the church affiliations of Calvert's first colonists,

and the peculiarities of the "sectaries" of Pennsylvania. These and many related topics which have received from historians consideration entirely out of proportion to their real significance would be pushed into the background, while serious effort would centre in tracing the moral and spiritual decline that befell the several colonial settlements as the inevitable result of their economic struggle, exclusiveness, and deeply rooted prejudice.

But in one spot at least it would be shown that the spiritual fervor failed to abate. Through the long pastorate of Solomon Stoddard, the church at Northampton had the joy of reaping five revival harvests, so that it was into an atmosphere of revivalistic expectancy that Jonathan Edwards entered when he assumed the pastoral charge of this church. And soon the Great Awakening was in progress, reaching out from the little Northampton village until the entire colonial area from north to south and from the sea to the utmost fringe of settlement had felt its power. For the first time in American religious history, large accessions were made to Christian forces, church organizations and edifices were vastly multiplied, materialism suffered a decided setback, and coarse immoralities were checked. Of greater importance was the establishment of contacts between religious groups that hitherto had greatly misunderstood each other. A common bond of sympathy and interest contributed toward the creation of a colonial religious consciousness and concerted lines of religious effort. In short, the Great Awakening marks the beginning of an aggressive American Christianity.

So slow was the subsidence of this quickening that, at most, only a few years of "normalcy" intervened before the awakening of the Revolutionary era, in which the Presbyterians and Baptists, finding spiritual inspiration in their advocacy of democracy and free-church ideals, acquired such prestige and numerical strength as to give them a recognized place among the religious forces of the country. The denominational foundations of the Baptists

and Presbyterians were laid in a period of revivalistic fervor. From this same awakening the Methodists reaped almost as largely. Emerging from the ostracism and persecution due to the British affiliations of its pioneer travelling preachers, Methodism entered upon an era of large ingathering, strategically significant as forming a base from which it was able courageously to push its outposts into the newly settled districts of the enlarging interior.

Soon followed the Second Awakening, the stirrings of which were felt not only along the seaboard and particularly in the colleges, but in the remote settlements of the Carolinas, Kentucky, Tennessee, and the Western Reserve, where immense congregations assembled for sacramental communion, social fellowship, and curiosity. At the critical moment when immigration into the Middle West was beginning to assume large proportions, this revival served as a timely deterrent to the laxity of morals naturally associated with the shifting of population from one area to another, while it also quickened a sense of responsibility of the old and strong communities to the new and weak. Like its precursor the Great Awakening, this revival died away slowly. After five years of vigorous manifestation as the century closed, it gradually spent itself in the course of the next decade.

The War of 1812, accompanied by the spiritual and moral deterioration usually attending militaristic strain, interrupted the progress of widespread revival, until with the opening of the third decade of the nineteenth century local quickenings again began to break out in several sections of New York State, and probably over a wider area. With the organization of the American and Baptist Home Mission Societies, and the consequent sending forth of a large corps of missionaries into the newly settled districts, revivals became general throughout the trans-Allegheny region, continuing with unabated force right through to the depression of 1837, when their momentum

was slightly moderated. It is noteworthy that in the contemporary literature of the first forty years of this century no subject so engrossed the interest of the Christian public as did these revivals. During this period great issues emerged, such as America's responsibility to foreign missions, the most effective means of organizing for work on the home field, the adjustment of Methodist polity to the demands of American democracy, and the attitude of the churches to negro enslavement. And yet, judged from contemporary records, the dominating, unifying interest of the period was the fluctuation of revival quickening throughout the widening territories of settlement.

Following this long period of revivals, a season of controversy ensued. The Presbyterians had their theological troubles, and the Methodists and Baptists were inflamed over the slavery issue. Evangelism necessarily was thrown into the background. Yet for only a surprisingly brief period. The Finney campaign, notable for the wide distribution of its influences from coast to coast, as if by providential intervention united the religious forces of the North for the trying days of the Civil War. Reconstruction had not progressed far when Dwight L. Moody emerged in the memorable campaigns of the early seventies. Moody in turn has been succeeded by Torrey, Chapman, and less distinguished lights. In spite of the growing emphasis upon the socialized expression of Christianity to be realized in part through the principles of religious education, the annual season of protracted meetings, of special services, and of such has retained its place among the red-letter periods of many a church calendar. Each autumn witnesses the going forth of hundreds of professional evangelists to reclaim moral derelicts and to secure the definite commitment to Christian discipleship of young folk who have been under the less emotional ministry of the regular pastors. In hundreds of our churches revivalism survives as the normal outreaching of the Christian group for the non-Christian. Among these there is no

more expectation of securing conversions at other than revival seasons than there is among farmers of harvesting their crops in the winter months. Long accustomed to this revivalistic program, and themselves victims of a revivalistic psychology, it is not surprising that many of the most faithful members of these churches unceasingly keep vigil for times of refreshing while plaintively harking back to "old-time religion."

But it is next to be observed that revivalism has proved to be as distinctive of American Protestantism as it has been characteristic. "The idea of revivals," says one, "is the gift of American to foreign Calvinism." [1] In the lengthy career of European Christianity, nothing appears corresponding to the revivalistic emphasis of America. During the early centuries of Christian history, accessions to the church were made through a catechumenate conducted with considerable thoroughness. In protecting itself against the infiltration of paganism, the calmly reasoned individual appeal seems to have been the prevailing instrument of Christian propaganda. Later, of course, when Christianity became closely identified with the State, and thoroughly sacerdotalized, there was no urge whatever to an evangelical appeal. The requirements of citizenship and the dread of otherworldly punishment constrained all to submit to the sacraments and other priestly impositions. Why should priests plead the claims of Christ when the populace could be scared into a reasonable conformity to the moral standards of Christianity by the threat of withholding the sacraments? With a materialistic, otherworldly conception of Christianity, what more was needed than participation in the sacraments? And so everyone was gathered into the church and there were no lost sheep to reclaim, since all were in the fold. To evangelism, therefore, the mediæval clergy had no *motif* whatever. To preaching, indeed, of any character the incentive was not powerful. Priests naturally became little

[1] Allen, "Jonathan Edwards," p. 136.

more than altar officials. The wonder is that preaching survived as much as it did; the greater marvel that occasionally a really powerful messenger of repentance and righteousness appeared.

Monasticism, to be sure, has been characterized by some writers as a type of revivalism. And on the surface there is an admitted resemblance between the periodic rise of Orders and the successive waves of revival quickening. Close observation, however, discovers that the similarity does not penetrate beneath the surface. Monasticism was never motivated by a yearning of the "saved" for the "unsaved." Monks did not question the magic efficacy of the priest and his sacraments. The noblest in their ranks sought in the retreat of the cloister the better way toward saintliness. Except in so far as monasticism produced some of the great mediæval missionaries who carried the Christian evangel to outlying barbarians, it was a movement within the church to realize higher standards of spiritual-mindedness rather than to reach out to the unevangelized. Its concern was to provide a retreat for saints much more than a refuge for prodigals.

With their clearer appreciation of the spiritual character of religion and their deep aversion to sacerdotalism, the Waldenses and Anabaptists might have been expected to anticipate in some respects the methods of modern evangelism. But such was not the case. The unsleeping vigilance of the persecuting church compelled these groups to conduct their propaganda under cleverly devised disguise, and to increase their following through the contacts of individual with individual. A similar policy of repression accounts in large measure for the lack of organized evangelical effort among the English Dissenters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was reserved for the following century, more tolerant because more commercial in its spirit, under the finely balanced leadership of the Wesleys and Whitefield, to give to Britain an evangelical quickening that stirred its life religiously and socially to the

profoundest depths. Unlike the contemporary movement in New England, by which in some degree it was impelled and shaped, the evangelical revival of Britain tarried long but never returned. For Britain the nineteenth century has not proved to be an era of revivals. Neither the Established nor the Free churches have produced successors to the Wesleys and Whitefield. The Free churches, the natural stronghold of evangelical ideals and methods, have shown no disposition to identify their aggressive campaign among the masses with periodic revivalism. The professional evangelist has found in Britain no opportunity corresponding to that of America. "Gypsy" Smith almost alone has been able to continue an effective evangelistic ministry among the British people. It is true that Moody conducted successful campaigns and that the reception accorded to Torrey and Chapman was cordial. Yet one conversant with the religious activities of the British churches knows full well that the splendid work of "Gypsy" Smith and less widely known British "missioners," with the occasional visits of American evangelists, has been at most only an incident in their program of evangelism. There has been no tendency to look to evangelists as the main instrument in establishing contact between the church and the masses. Although many churches have their "missions," these are not to be hastily interpreted as the counterpart of American special revival meetings. In their conduct and objective these are widely removed from each other.

As for continental Christianity during post-Reformation times, revivalism has played a rôle even less conspicuous than in Britain. French Protestantism, originally cast in the mold of Humanism, subjected to the long ordeal of fighting on battlefields to purchase privileges of which on galling illegal grounds it was later deprived, and at last sharing in the general misfortune that befell religion after the Revolution, has possessed neither the disposition nor the incentive to resort to revivalism. French prophets

early in the eighteenth century rehabilitated a type of enthusiasm, but in the course of fifty years its spell had entirely disappeared. Lutheranism early in its career fell back into dogmatic inertia. Pietism by and by interposed its protest but, though highly evangelical in its missionary interest, has been averse to mechanically imposed awakenings. Moravianism has followed the same course. Waldensianism, gallantly surviving the persecution of centuries, has shown some disposition in Italy to resort to revivalistic methods. So also have the Baptists in carrying their message to Central Europe. In Scandinavia, slight awakenings have appeared, and a few evangelists have emerged into prominence. But the continent generally was visited by no widespread awakening corresponding to the evangelical revival in Britain. At most its quickenings have been confined to small areas, and have failed to operate upon society as a whole. Hence there has developed in continental churches no disposition to resort to seasonal programs, nor anything approximating the revivalistic attitude of mind.

As characteristic and distinctive of American religious life, revivalism must be traceable to certain features peculiar to the environment in which the American church has been called upon to function. In endeavoring to ascertain just what these features were, one is immediately disposed to look into the history of the Northampton church, the historic fountainhead of periodic awakenings. Elsewhere in New England there seem to have been movements marked by special religious fervor, as in East Windsor under the ministry of Jonathan Edwards' father. But in Northampton, during the long pastorate of Stoddard, seasons of refreshing were a recurrent feature. Edwards cites five as having occurred between 1689 and 1718, with a sixth shortly after his accession to the full pastorate. A reading of the "Surprising Narrative" gives the impression that in respect of periodic ingathering the history of the Northampton church was unique. Two

factors may serve as a possible explanation. The first was the personality of Stoddard, of whom Edwards speaks as "a very great man of strong powers of mind, of great grace and a great authority, of a masterly countenance, speech, and behavior," looked up to by many "almost as a sort of deity," and regarded by the Indians of the neighborhood as the "Englishman's God." If the exceptional qualities of Edwards' mother may be taken as any index of her father's endowments, Stoddard was a man of commanding personality, the content and delivery of whose sermons goes far in accounting for the extraordinary features in the history of his congregation. In the second place the ministry of this remarkable "father in Israel," was in a community, where to profound religious imagination and deep emotion prevailing among New England Puritans of the seventeenth century, there was added a tinge of melancholy due to the hardships and anxieties of living in a comparatively remote pioneer settlement under the constant fear of attack from the Indians. Among folk so constituted and environed, vivid emotional preaching may well have been productive of results quite out of the ordinary.[2]

Be the explanation what it may, in entering upon his ministry at Northampton, Edwards found himself in a revivalistic atmosphere. Grandfather Stoddard, then in ripe old age, was probably much given to talking to his promising grandson about the days of refreshing in years gone by, and Edwards recalls the comfort that a small ingathering gave this pastor emeritus as he was standing on the borders of the grave. Many of the congregation, moreover, must have retained vivid memories of the stirring times of former blessing. The fact that the newly installed minister soon married a woman who to unusual

[2] On these characteristics of New England life see Davenport, "Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals," Chap. VIII, and Hayes, "Study of the Edwardean Revivals," *American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. XIII.

endowments of grace, culture, and personality added a mystical tendency toward transports "into a kind of heavenly Elysium" should not escape attention, nor that his conversance with history had brought to his attention a Scotch revival a century before in which highly emotional phenomena had appeared. That his powerful intellect had forged out an irresistible logic of Calvinistic sovereignty, election, and reprobation, and that his imagination enabled him vividly to depict the bliss of the redeemed and the horrors of the damned, is the crowning consideration. In any church, indeed, no matter what its history or the composition of its membership, Edwards, in the exuberance of his freshly elaborated Calvinistic message, would have created a profound impression. To characterize the awakening that convulsed the Northampton and surrounding churches during the winter 1734-35 as the "Edwardean revival" is certainly no misnomer. No other single factor is so largely explanatory of the distinctive characteristics of the movement as the personality and Calvinistic message of Edwards. But this does not imply that other factors may be entirely eliminated. However powerful Edwards' preaching, it was addressed to people who for almost a century had been in periodic dread of exhausted food supplies or Indian attack. Though fearless through their constant contact with frontier dangers, they were the victims of a latent fear that, played upon by descriptions of hell and divine wrath, made them peculiarly susceptible to prostrations and hysterical extravagances.[3]

The Great Awakening of the following decade was the natural overflow of the Edwardean revival. The "Narrative of the Surprising Work of Grace," falling under the observation of many in Boston and elsewhere, aroused the religious mind to a high state of expectancy, while the preaching of Pomeroy, Tucker, the Tennent brothers, and

[3] For the relation of fearlessness and fear, see Davenport, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

others seems to have been almost as lurid as that of Edwards. Whitefield alone, among the preachers of this movement, dwelt more fully upon the kindlier aspects of the gospel's message. In contrast, however, with the Edwardean revival, it was carried over a wider area, including not only older centres, such as Boston and Philadelphia where long settlement had produced a tranquillity of mind, but into backward districts where solicitude even more pronounced than in the longer established village of Northampton made the inhabitants more susceptible to emotional appeals.

In several particulars the revival of the Revolutionary era differed from the Edwardean and the Great Awakening. There was a notable absence of outstanding leaders, such as Edwards, Whitefield, and the Tennent brothers. Without the stimulus of special meetings, congregations suddenly awakened to a deepened sense of spiritual values. Pastorless churches not infrequently shared in this spiritual quickening. The preaching does not seem to have been as strongly emotional and imaginative as in the earlier revivals. The large accessions to Baptist and Presbyterian membership were due to the prestige and popularity derived from their staunch advocacy of republican ideals, and their vigorous resistance in New England and Virginia to everything that savored of state-church favoritism. Their demand that all churches should enjoy equal rights, gallantly maintained as it was to the point of distraint of property and imprisonment, enriched the spiritual tone of the membership of these two bodies. To the Methodists, however, the Revolution proved an embarrassment rather than an opportunity. Their large numerical gains of the early seventies shriveled almost to the vanishing-point in the tense years during which suspicion and prejudice visited their preachers with such popular disfavor as to make their preaching almost ineffective and to necessitate in some cases their retreat to places of hiding. But with the close of the war the pent-up enthusiasm of these

apostles of Wesley, who felt the urgency and honor of planting Methodism in this new hemisphere, broke through all bounds, reaping an especially rich harvest in Virginia, where Anglicanism had become inert and indifferent to the needs of the people.

The opening of the national period is almost coincident with the outbreak of the Second Awakening, which in important respects was sharply differentiated from the revivals of the colonial period. Settlement by this time had begun to extend beyond the mountains, and each year was witnessing the bending back toward the west of the frontier line. With a real apostolic urge the Methodist circuit riders had felt the challenge to follow the trail of the backwoodsman with the gospel, and Baptist and Presbyterian missionaries had been aroused by the same imperative. Frontiersmen with limited, or no resources were unable to proceed immediately to erect a meeting-house or even a school. In those strenuous days the erection indeed of a log cottage was no mean achievement. It was to this, at length, that the adventurous preacher came. Wearied, wet, and harried with trail anxieties, he was glad to receive its hospitality, and to bring his message of religious inspiration to parents and children who read and prayed with him around the fireplace, lingering long into the night as they listened so eagerly to the traveller's story of doings "back home." By and by, neighbors were invited to meet the preacher, whose time was thus economized by an exhortation to the community assembled together rather than by visitation in each separate cottage. The next stage was when a date was fixed for the minister to conduct a religious service for all the members of the district. Appointments were thus made for meetings sometimes months in the future. After the fashion of a modern Chautauqua lecturer, the circuit rider often found himself booked up for a year ahead. Asbury's *Journal* abounds in references to appointments dated thus far in advance. Unless the preacher of some other de-

nomination happened along in the interim, months and perhaps a year might elapse between appointments. More adequate provision for worship was inevitable to meet the needs of folks whose settlement on the frontier, far from lessening, often intensified their thirst for religious fellowship. Hence the camp meeting. Just when and where it originated remains obscure. Since preachers travelled over such wide areas, it was felt that time could be economized by their conducting at convenient points a series of meetings rather than by filling a succession of single appointments. People widely scattered, who might find it impossible to be present for a single meeting, could attend some of a series of protracted services. Folks indifferent to a small religious service in some neighbor's cottage, might be attracted by the more imposing protracted meeting, which drew the countryside somewhat after the fashion of the later country fair. Additional impressiveness was imparted through the observance of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The fact that the exhortations were made by several rather than by one preacher gave variety to the exercises. The scene was decidedly animated when several preachers might be heard within sound of each other's voices, especially in the evening session when the flare of torches dispelled the heavy shadows of pendant branches.

From its earliest appearance the camp meeting drew immense crowds. One is disposed at first to regard the estimate of audiences as vastly exaggerated, but the consentient testimony of contemporary writers, of whom some must be classed as keenly critical, seems to leave no doubt that thousands of people often resorted to these camp grounds. From a radius of scores of miles settlers flocked to the festive event of the year. For long months many of them had not so much as seen the face of a preacher, and a tedious wagon trek over uncomfortable roads was a small price for the spiritual tonic of four whole days of preaching, praying, and singing. Others less religiously

disposed found in the social fellowship of the camp assembly a welcome break from the depressing monotony of the isolated settler's cabin. Some, of course, were drawn by vulgar curiosity, where all sorts of improprieties were reported as of common occurrence. It is not surprising that emotional disorders were prevalent. Many folks were in a state of high spiritual expectancy when they reached the camp ground. For weeks and months they had been looking forward to this great annual event, and as a consequence their nerves were keyed to the limit. Moreover, frontier life offered an extremely limited range of interests. With few social contacts and extremely limited facilities for coming in touch with the thinking and happenings of the world at large, the settler's mind was liable to be completely dominated by whatever ideas he chanced to meet. The routine of a life consumed in chopping trees, breaking land, and doing chores, made the settler an easy mark for whatever new interest crossed the threshold of his thinking. And on the camp ground, no matter by what motive he had been drawn, the listener was brought face to face with a compelling interest—that of personal religion. However unversed in the technique of psychology, the camp preachers were sound psychologists. One subject, and only one, was kept before the vast assembly. The preacher was hortatory and rarely expository. Much of the time he thundered forth the terrors of hell. And fear lurked in the background for people who were in ceaseless conflict with the wily savage—much more so than in the Northampton audiences of Edwards' day. Hence the prostrations, jerks, and barkings even of crestfallen critics who came to make a laughingstock of the occasion.

However defective the camp meeting may appear to the scientific religious thinking of the twentieth century, it probably offered the most practical solution of the urgent religious needs of the undeveloped frontier. It fitted readily into the itinerant system of Methodism. It pro-

tected earnest but untrained preachers, drafted by the urgency of the times, from the strain of constant ministry to a single congregation. A mere handful of preachers were able to distribute their services over a vast area that otherwise would have had no spiritual ministration whatever.

In the half-century or more during which frontier communities, springing up first in the Ohio and later in the Mississippi Valley, kept calling for pastoral reinforcements out of all proportion to the resources of the long-established churches of the East, the camp meeting had ample time to establish itself as an instrument for keeping alive the religious interests of newly occupied areas. Nor did it survive only while new areas were passing through the first stages of social development. Endeared in the memories of people to whom in the days of their first struggles it had brought much religious and social comfort, the camp meeting continued long after the community had reached a stage of development that justified and demanded a more intensive, cultural type of religious ministry. Its sentimental hold was too strong to give way before cultural advance. A greater misfortune lay in the fact that an institution springing from the necessities of border settlements was soon imported into the highly socialized regions of the East. Surprising to relate, the camp meeting was cordially welcomed in New England. This innovation was due to Methodism. Finding the camp meeting so effective in the West, it concluded that the same institution might be equally successful in planting the banners of Methodism even in the northern strongholds of Congregationalism. Other denominations, hesitant at first, soon fell into line. And so it came to pass that a seasonal method of visitation began to prevail not only in the pioneer districts, where an inadequate force of preachers had to content itself by giving to each district only occasional attention, but also in the older established churches that enjoyed the full-time services of their min-

isters. Without pausing to inquire into the distinctive environment in which the camp meeting had arisen and functioned so normally, churches in every section of the country seemed to discern in this institution the means of propaganda suited to their several constituencies. In this way the habit of special meetings was incurred, and the spontaneous awakenings of the colonial period found their counterpart in the strained, conventional, periodic revivals of the first half of the nineteenth century. As long as the evangelically-minded throughout the East were disposed to enthusiastically indorse the camp meeting, in original or modified form, as the novel means of arousing the cold and indifferent, local revivals were bound to be a prominent feature of the times. A like prominence was certain to characterize revivalism, while frontier settlement, proceeding rapidly and in large proportions, impelled circuit riders and other missionaries to use the camp meeting as the most effective means of rapidly establishing church influence in new areas, and of capturing ground for their rival denominational interests. The first four decades of the nineteenth century was an era of almost continual turmoil of local revivals, because it was dominated by the institution of the camp meeting.

But a distinct change appears about the middle of the century. Local revivals no longer abound as in the preceding fifty years. The Finney campaign stirred the larger centres, but much more after the fashion of the colonial awakenings. The Moody movement, also, was largely confined to the cities. It is true, of course, that since Moody's day thousands of churches still persist in the seasonal special efforts; nevertheless, the aggregate revivalistic effort of the last fifty years does not begin to compare proportionally with that of the earlier half of the century. Its persistence, moreover, is especially in areas whose emergence from frontier conditions is comparatively recent. Urban communities have been showing increasing disposition to resort to methods more educa-

tional in character. The explanation of this change is not far to seek. Ministerial forces have become more adequate to the demands of religious leadership. The cultural cravings of the ministry have made itineracy increasingly distasteful. More elaborate academic training has given preachers an inclination and aptitude for the reasoned discourse rather than for the emotional appeal. The wider range of human interests, and the contacts among folks, even the most isolated, with community and national currents of thinking, have given a weirdness and unreality to appeals that once were compelling. The latent fear of the frontiersman so easily played upon by the "hell-fire damnation" preacher has given way before the complacency of the comfortable materialist.

Frontier revivalism has therefore been gradually passing. It is true that much of it yet remains. In some districts it is still solidly intrenched, and its dislodgement gives no promise of early realization. Not unnaturally it vigorously contests its ground. Legitimately it points to its splendid service in the past. Its advocates may be pardoned for endeavoring to establish its permanent indispensability from its readily conceded value in the days that lie behind. Prophets of this character have repeatedly arisen during the history of the church. But nothing is more axiomatic with the church historian than that the successful use of an instrument in one set of circumstances is no protection against its obsolescence under different conditions. It, therefore, seems necessary for one acquainted with the course of the church through twenty centuries to conclude that present-day American revivalism is a tenacious carry-over from a phase of social development now almost past.

This does not mean, of course, that America may witness no further spiritual awakenings. Far from it. It has been shown that the quickenings of the colonial period were produced in only a small measure by frontier conditions. They were rather spontaneous developments of

evangelical Christianity, in one case stamping down the inertia of materialism induced by the strain of immigration, and in the other quickened by a stalwart opposition to the perpetuation in America of a state-endowed church. Be it noted that an awakening is the weapon that evangelicism always retains for dealing with critical, abnormal moral and social conditions that threaten its existence. It is the meed, moreover, for faith and steadfastness and heroism in days of obscured vision and complacency. There is, therefore, the ever-present possibility of spontaneous seasons of refreshing long after civilization, having sloughed off its frontier primitivity, has relegated to limbo its dependence upon conventional revivalism and the professional evangelist.

CHAPTER IV

THE SMALL COLLEGES

In the American educational system the small college has proved to be one of the most conspicuous features. And this not so much because of its uniqueness when compared with corresponding institutions in the educational structures of other nations, but because of the commanding place it has filled in the past and continues to hold in the educational effort of the American people. Almost forty per cent of the aggregate student attendance in universities, colleges, and technological schools of our country is found in institutions with an enrollment of less than two thousand.[1] According to the Report of the Commissioner of Education for 1917 (based on returns 1915-16) more than four-fifths of the universities, colleges and technological schools had enrollment each under fifteen hundred. Three-fifths of these institutions reported a registration below the five hundred mark, and more than one-fifth failed to enroll two hundred apiece.[2]

Small colleges as a class are not the creations of yesterday. Their insignificant attendance has not been due to

[1] Actual figures for years 1915-1916 showed total attendance, 259,511; attendance in schools registering each less than two thousand, 146,374.

[2] Actual figures:

No. of schools with registration					below 200	139
"	"	"	"	"	between 200 and 500	225
"	"	"	"	"	" 500 and 1000	73
"	"	"	"	"	" 1000 and 1500	30
"	"	"	"	"	above 1500	107

A few small institutions that failed to submit reports would slightly increase the numbers of the first two classes above.

the fact that they are young and have lacked time to make their way into the class of big institutions. Many of them were as largely attended fifty years ago as they are to-day. Along the Atlantic seaboard, the last century has witnessed the rise of several institutions for the higher education of women, and the Roman Catholics also have established a few colleges. Care for the educational needs of the negro has operated with like results. Beyond this, few small colleges have emerged—a score and a half at most. The period of extensive college beginnings lies farther back in the first seventy-five years of the national period.

Crossing to the extreme westward it may prove a surprise to discover that in the areas of the Rockies and along the Pacific seaboard the small-college movement has failed to develop any considerable strength. Only eighteen institutions of this character are distributed in the large territory referred to above. Of these, six have been founded during the last forty years; the remaining twelve were established when the country was young and undeveloped.

The Valley of the Mississippi has proved particularly congenial to the small college, especially the states of Iowa, Missouri and Kansas, where more than half a hundred have arisen. But only a few—approximately a dozen—have been established within the last thirty years. It was while this region was in process of settlement that the colleges multiplied in large number. The northwestern states, not peopled as early as the central Mississippi Valley, turned to higher educational problems as late as the eighties. Since that period, only one college has been established. Wisconsin founded all its colleges save three before the Civil War. In Illinois, college enterprise getting under way in the late twenties was vigorous for about forty years. Then it slackened. Only six colleges have been established in the last half century. Indiana laid college foundations as early as the first decade of the nineteenth century and practically closed this phase of its development before the outbreak of the Civil War.

Ohio with more small educational institutions than any other State in the Union had established all these save five a half a century ago. Michigan, settled a little later than Ohio, has launched only two colleges since the Civil War. With the exception of female institutions, the colleges of Kentucky are foundations largely of the first half of the nineteenth century, and earlier. Tennessee with two venerable colleges established in the closing decade of the eighteenth century, set up only four more during the last fifty years. New York State presents a parallel development—three coeducational institutions founded in a half a century. Pennsylvania has much the same college history—nine coeducational foundations since the Civil War.

It is apparent, therefore, that the tendency to multiply small colleges has had little vigor for approximately fifty years. In nearly all the mid-western states, the college movement proceeded along with the process of settlement. So long as settlement was in progress, there was no slackened enthusiasm for the starting of small colleges. As the frontier line extended, these institutions multiplied. And as frontier conditions were gradually superseded by a more highly socialized form of life, scores of these schools were allowed to languish and die. Educational effort was increasingly concentrated around the maintaining and strengthening of institutions already in existence, rather than in the launching of new ones. The small college found its congenial environment in the frontier and itself was essentially a frontier institution.

To understand the spontaneous multiplication of small institutions in newly settled regions, it is necessary to keep in mind that to the folks who in the early part of the nineteenth century made their way from the seaboard into the interior, the church was a revered and cherished institution. However far the American people have drifted during the latter part of the last century into the non-church-going habit, it was not so when the middle western

frontier was first occupied. Its settlers, particularly the New Englanders, had lived in communities where the church had been the pivotal institution. There had been times, to be sure, when religion and morals had suffered from the strain of excessive hardships and the relaxing tendency of prosperity. The Revolution, moreover, detached many from conventional ways of worship. But revivals, from time to time, had interposed, bringing renewed interest in the House of God. An outstanding feature of the Great Awakening had been the erection of scores of church edifices in New England. However far back from village and town centres the men and women of colonial days settled, few were beyond the range of church ministrations. If it was not always easy to reach the meeting-house, those were times when people were not daunted by inconvenience and hardship. And the longest road was shortened as they thought of all that the church had been to their fathers, who not long before had crossed the sea for love of a church ideal. It was of considerable importance, moreover, that through the incoming of ministers from abroad, and in larger measure through the output of Harvard, Yale, Brown, the Log College, and kindred institutions, the pulpit needs of New England society had been well cared for.

People thus accustomed to the weekly means of Grace and the counsel of a minister might be expected in new communities to seek the early establishment of church facilities. Under stress of circumstances they could say farewell to neighbors, and face the loneliness and discomforts of border life. Least of all, however, could they dispense with the church. Hence it was that in some instances a New England community immigrated *en masse,* taking their minister with them. Hence also the hearty welcome extended to the itinerant missionary in districts that as yet had been unable to provide themselves with a meeting-house or preacher.

It is not to be assumed, of course, that all the settlers on

the frontier had imbibed in earlier years the church-going habit, nor that in the break with the church-going ways of the East many had not lost their reverence for the Sabbath and the church. By a timely providence, however, it happened that missionary enthusiasm, kindled by the Second Awakening, was impelled to carry the Gospel not only to the benighted Orient, but to the New West, where materialism was already undermining respect for the church and for morality.

An immediate result of the shifting of population from the East to the interior was an urgent demand for ministers. Rarely, if ever, in the entire course of its history has the Christian church been confronted with a task more herculean than that of a century ago when it was summoned to supply religious ministration to the hundreds of thousands scattered in the recesses and salients of the changing frontier zone. The Methodist circuit rider and the itinerating missionary in the service of other evangelical bodies, were a welcome though only partial solution of this pressing pastoral problem. The fact that a few newly founded theological seminaries in the East—Andover, Princeton, Newton, Bangor, Yale—were directing westward some of their graduates, was a timely contribution. The challenge to larger usefulness, attracting to the West a considerable number of preachers from the more circumscribed parishes of the East, provided some further relief. Soon, however, there was a corresponding dearth of leaders in the old established churches of the East. The most strategic distribution of available ministerial forces was absolutely inadequate to meet this emergency. Only by a largely increased number of pastors could the situation be mastered.

In a crisis so acute, there was a temptation to draft into service robust men of religious earnestness and sound judgment but lacking in academic training. The fact that Methodists and Baptists had already been using with considerable success men of this type did not make the

temptation less appealing. In the main, however, it did not prevail. Among the earliest colleges planted by American Methodism, one was established in the very heart of the frontier. Methodist educational ministerial standards were raised rather than lowered by contact with the interior. In their controversies with the Campbellites, the Baptists discovered the value of an intellectually disciplined minister. Soon after they took steps to found the Granville Literary and Theological Institute.

As the descendants of those "dreading to leave an illiterate minister to the churches after our present ministry shall be in the dust," the Congregationalists and Presbyterians were put to a severe test; more so, indeed, than were either the Methodists or Baptists. It fell to them to decide between accepting or rejecting a compromise in the matter of ministerial training that, under the pressure of circumstances, might have seemed a veritable necessity. To them, however, it did not so appear. Convinced that only through a highly trained ministry, produced through the slow processes of education, could there ultimately be an adequate supply of preachers for the needs of the multiplying churches, they chose to adhere to New England traditions of a "godly and learned clergy." This decision it was that proved the decisive factor in extending the college movement into the West.

Among those who recognized the necessity of a college-trained ministry, some would have had the candidates of the West go to the East for their education. Richer culture they argued was available there. Less financial outlay was involved by avoiding duplicated educational equipment. But the saner view prevailed—that travelling expenses would prove prohibitive to ministerial students, whose resources almost invariably were very limited. They, moreover, had the insight to see that an Eastern type of training, superior though it might be in point of culture, might prove inferior in point of efficiency when

compared with the less elaborate courses of young western institutions.

Most of the frontier colleges were, therefore, founded for the explicit purpose of helping to solve the problem of ministerial leadership. In the charter or prospectus of a college, the object was usually set forth as providing "facilities for a suitable education to the ministry of the Gospel." Sometimes this was the only declared object of the institution; sometimes it appeared along with other avowed purposes. In the latter case it usually ranked first among the several aims. What gained patronage for struggling young colleges was most of all their service to the churches in providing ministers. This explains why it was that colleges primarily founded for the culture and discipline requisite in all the walks of life, soon began to give prominence also to their facilities for ministerial education. It accounts also for the proud mention of the number of ministers whose names were enrolled on alumni lists. Annual reports of college presidents and trustees rarely failed to chronicle the proportion of ministers in the graduating classes.[3]

The present-day tendency to criticize those who a century ago and later encouraged and promoted the establishment of institutions which they must have known were doomed for years at least to meager teaching facilities, a small local constituency of students, and a precarious financial existence, arises from a failure to reckon with the college conditions of the East, under the shadow of which these small college founders dreamed and planned and enterprised and struggled. In harmony with the original design of the Massachusetts Bay Founders not to identify the cause of higher learning exclusively with "the college" at Cambridge but to plant a similar institu-

[3] The statements of the above paragraph are all based upon an examination made by the writer of the earliest circulars of at least a score of the middle western colleges—Denison, Kalamazoo, Franklin, Wabash, De Paw, Shurtleff, Grinell, Knox, Kenyon, Miami, Illinois, William Jewell, Oberlin, Beloit, Ripon.

tion in each of the New England colonies, the New Haven group had launched, sixty years later, their collegiate school afterwards known as Yale College. Intervals of seventy and a hundred years had witnessed in Dartmouth and Bowdoin the birth of two new members into the family of colleges. Williams College had been able to justify its existence upon the ground that, while not infringing upon the territories of Yale and Dartmouth, it might diffuse learning in the border states of Vermont and New York.[4] Academies covering some of the curricula of the colleges and with a Christian ideal of education, had also begun to multiply, at least half a dozen having been established in New Hampshire alone before the opening of the nineteenth century.[5] It was therefore only a continuance of the New England educational policy of committing the impartation of learning to several geographically distributed institutions rather than to one, when in the area of settlement vastly enlarged by the westward movement of population, the foundation of numerous new colleges was felt to be a necessity.

The fact that these young institutions were likely to remain small for many years and to have their perpetual financial struggles culminating in periodic crises, also needs to be given its New England historical background. It is to be remembered that the early nineteenth century had no contrasted "large" and "small" colleges. At the time when humble colleges were being planted in the West there was not a big educational institution in America. Nor was there one that was really wealthy. It took more than thirty years for Williams College to reach the place where its president felt justified in announcing at the dedication of the chapel, "Heaven has decreed that this college shall live." Through this long period its graduating class had averaged only sixteen. Dartmouth, fifty years after its romantic beginning, was so weakened in

[4] Durfee, "A History of Williams College," p. 63.
[5] Circular United States Bureau of Education, No. XXII, p. 51.

prestige and resources by wrangling and litigation that its presidency went a-begging for an occupant. An alumnus of Yale, surveying the beneficent influences that for more than a hundred years had been radiating from his alma mater, rebuked the legislature of Connecticut for its strange apathy to an institution that then (1838) had an income "aside from the quarterly bills of students, not much exceeding two thousand dollars per annum." [6] Nor was Harvard faring much better. A policy of expansion involved huge debts just at the time when the legislature concluded that the college had reached its maturity and must henceforth provide for its own necessity. The salaries, in consequence, had to be reduced and tuition fees advanced.

Far, therefore, from being disconcerted by any overshadowing strength in point of equipment, endowment or attendance, the promoters of small frontier colleges found everything to inspire them in the history of these older eastern institutions that were still struggling for a secured existence. Men of faith were justified in concluding that new communities reconciled to humble beginnings and willing to sustain heavy sacrifices, would be able, in an equal span of years to reproduce Williams or Dartmouth, or even a Yale or Harvard.

In the early days of mid-western college development the traditional classical curriculum prevailed. Greek, Latin, Mathematics, English, and Mental and Moral Philosophy were the main ingredients, with a slight admixture of History, Political Economy and the Physical Sciences. Slight variations in the curricula of different colleges reflected the impulse of instructors to follow the

[6] Baldwin, "Annals of Yale College," p. 210. The same alumnus contemplating young colleges rapidly rising in many sections of the country expressed the fear that Yale, "however honorable and dear its past reputation to the friends of science, unable to advance with the spirit of an enlightened age, forced by poverty to a sluggish and feeble step," might soon find herself compelled "to yield the palm of honorable competition to more fortunate rivals." *Ibid.*

footsteps of their former teachers in some eastern institution. Through the appointment of its graduates to the presidency or to significant positions on the teaching staff, a New England institution was likely to reproduce its distinctive features in some young college of the West.[7]

A curriculum so scholastic, unpractical and disciplinary is not to be construed as a shiftless surrender on the part of educational leaders in the newly settled district to educational ideals ill adapted to the peculiar needs of their constituency. The Classics in particular were stressed, not only as an instrument of intellectual discipline, but also as a means to a more illuminating exposition of the Scriptures. The fact that missionaries in India for a score of years had been giving so much attention to the work of translating the Bible into foreign vernaculars had served in America as a stimulant and popularizer of Biblical linguistics. Even in the remote settlements of western Ohio, some ministers had deep convictions upon the impossibility of understanding the Scriptures without a knowledge of their original languages.[8]

In the early catalogues of the oldest frontier institutions, no theological course is outlined. The nearest approach thereto was the study of Paley's "Natural Theology," Butler's "Analogy," Wayland's "Moral Science," and "The Evidences of Christianity." In lieu of a specified course, a general statement concerning theological education frequently appears in the annual college announcements. From these it is clear that an effort was being made to adapt such ministerial training as was given to the needs of the West; that instruction was practical, miscellaneous, and accommodated to the varied literary attainments of the students; that methods embraced recitations on the

[7] Granville Literary and Theological Institute, for instance, shows marked resemblance to Brown University, from which it drew its first three presidents and six of its foremost professors.

[8] The writer has chanced upon a sermon setting forth the value of Greek and Hebrew to Bible exposition preached before the Ohio Baptist Educational Society, August, 1836.

Evidences of Christianity and the principles of interpretation, lectures on Christian doctrine, homiletics, church history and practical theology, with discussions bearing on the ministerial office. Strange as it may seem in view of the traditions at Harvard and Yale, classroom work in Bible does not appear to have been provided.

During the early stages of the college movement, few instructors were assigned to the task of ministerial education. Sometimes as professor of Theology, or more frequently as professor of "Intellectual and Moral Philosophy," the president was engaged exclusively in theological teaching. In subjects other than theology, philosophy and ethics, instruction was given by members of the collegiate staff.

The president usually was a clergyman. So also was a large proportion of his colleagues. In the rudimentary stages of early settlement, ministers, obviously, were best adapted and most available for the task of college teaching. But with a broader diffusion of culture in communities longer established, the proportion of ministers on the college staffs gradually dwindled into that of a minority. Some faculties became almost exclusively lay in character. In general the personnel of trustee boards passed through the same evolution. At first ministers were in control; by and by, laymen largely took their places. There were cases, however, as at Granville, in which control, vested at first in laymen, later passed to clergymen.

Students coming mainly from the farm and small towns, with little or no secondary training, were likely to find themselves poorly equipped to enter immediately upon the full schedule of freshmen studies. In the classics they were specially handicapped. Their problem was solved through the organization of a Preparatory Department, where facilities were provided for removing matriculation deficiencies. Originally designed to prepare entrants for collegiate work, this department was soon welcomed as the instrument through which secondary and even primary

education was made accessible to large numbers who, amid frontier surroundings, had been entirely cut off in youth from school privileges. Conducted at first along informal tutorial lines, with classes based on age rather than on capacity, it gradually developed a Classical and English course, the former for such as aspired to collegiate work, the latter for such as intended to teach in public schools or felt the need of elementary instruction for their duties as citizens. In point of attendance, the Preparatory department was the overshadowing feature in the early years of the most of the small colleges. Its registration often exceeded that of all the other departments combined.

But while the Preparatory and Collegiate Departments rapidly attracted large or at least increasing attendance, the number of ministerial students languished in obscure insignificance. It does not seem to have mattered that so many of the colleges owed their founding to the solicitude of individual laymen and churches for a more adequate supply of ministers. Comparatively few candidates were forthcoming. In an aggregate college registration exceeding a hundred, it is not at all unusual to find the names of a half dozen or less of ministerial students. College catalogues indicate that far from showing healthy increase as other departments, ministerial enrollment remained almost static. In some instances it gradually declined and entirely disappeared. In certain colleges, exclusively theological work seems to have been entirely abandoned or merged with some other department.

And yet the annual reports of college trustees, the appeals of presidents, and the educational discussion of contemporary religious newspapers betray not the slightest tinge of disappointment over this disheartening registration of ministerial candidates. The inference seems obvious—religious educationalists had already come to realize that, no matter what its original purpose had been, the small college stood for much more than the training of young preachers. Contact with the pressing needs of

newly settled communities had created an enlargement of the original conception of the function of the college.

It was early forced home upon educationalists that the colleges were particularly well adapted to serve as a recruiting station for ministerial students. The rapid settlement of the frontier had made it apparent that however desirable it might be to have trained rather than illiterate preachers, the most pressing problem, nevertheless, was not so much to train as to multiply ministerial candidates. Of what avail were the facilities for the training of ministers if candidates did not present themselves for training? Under normal conditions, recruiting for the ministry was a responsibility that had rested upon homes and churches where Christian nurture was provided by parents and pastor. In new settlements, however, it was otherwise. There was little to direct a young man's attention to the vocation of preaching; much, indeed, to impel him along purely materialistic lines. Where recruiting for pastoral leadership was most urgently needed, it was least provided. But just at this juncture, the college seemed to offer hope of relief. It had its strong religious atmosphere, sustained by Bible study, chapel exercises and prayer meeting. Its Missionary Society charted the course for the consecrated young student seeking a career of Christian usefulness. Its "Concert of Prayer" nurtured an evangelism that was focussed upon the non-Christian members of the student body. Hence it was that a revival soon came to be looked upon as the normal feature of the college session. The conversion of students was as ardently sought after as were high standards of academic attainment. In a graduating class the proportion of professors of religion was a periodic subject for comment. So also was the number who had been converted during their college career. Though a college may have had few theological graduates, it proudly chronicled the gospel impulse it had given to unconverted students, who subsequently devoted themselves to the min-

istry. When the multiplication in the Middle West of struggling colleges aroused criticism throughout the East,[9] the strongest claim made for the continued support of these institutions was not so much that in enlarged numbers students had there received their training for the ministry, as that through the Christian environment of the college many had been turned to the higher service of the church. The significance of the college as a theological seminary thus early had paled before its value as a ministerial recruiting station.

Another factor that served to modify and enlarge the original conception of the college as a vocational school for ministers was its manifest success from the outset in producing a superior type of citizenship. In the first stages of western expansion the task that the church set before herself was distinctly institutional and religious rather than social. She was supremely concerned in providing ministers for unshepherded communities. These were to be capable men viewing their ministry as vastly more than that of preaching. Family and school visitation, the organization of Sunday schools, prayer and missionary meetings, the fostering of religious societies, distribution of religious literature and the promotion of temperance were to claim a share of their attention.[10] But a social interpretation of the minister's functions does not appear. At most, it was recognized that "although the preaching of the Gospel holds the first and highest place in the vows and responsibilities of the ministerial office, yet there are a variety of subordinate measures, which, with a view to the permanent and best effect of Gospel Ordinances, require the diligent attention of every pastor and every missionary." [11] The visiting of schools and the

[9] These criticisms may be found in "Plain Letters Addressed to a Parishioner," by John Todd.

[10] These duties are set forth in the "Instructions" issued by the American Home Missionary Society to its missionaries; see the author's "Sourcebook of American Church History," p. 423 f.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 423.

promotion of temperance were the only social aspects of the preacher's vocation. Christian citizenship as a product of the church and as a primary constructive asset of the community seems to have been lightly passed over. Only, however, for a short time. Actual contacts with the rapid processes of social development soon revealed how quickly a community responds to the program and initiative of the trained Christian layman, how greatly his coöperation strengthens the minister, and how for lack of this coöperation, many a well-conceived plan of church activity fails of success. It became apparent, therefore, that a really constructive program for the new society of the West should provide at least incidentally, if not primarily, for the development of civic leadership. And for this the small college was amply, and indeed, uniquely fitted. Its course of studies, though limited, was adequate; its contacts of college-fellowship offered a fine arena for the democratization of young life; its Christian atmosphere supplied the motivation for civic service. It was recalled that Yale College, originally devoted to the exclusive interests of the church, so revised her charter that in her collegiate school "youth could be instructed in all parts of learning to qualify them for public employments in church and civil state. The product in part had been a succession of illustrious judges, ambassadors, college presidents, and professors,—distinguished servants of the nation whose careers had been shaped in no small degree by the strongly Christian character of her presidents." [12]

How clearly the civic significance of a religious college education was appreciated by men of mid-western frontier times appears in the reply given by John Todd to the question, "Why must our churches be called upon to endow and raise up colleges in which to educate lawyers and physicians?" He answers as follows: "Let us look at

[12] See Abstract of the Seventh Annual Report of the Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education at the West, p. 15.

it in its true light. There can be no doubt but we must have lawyers and physicians; and they must be educated by somebody. Which is wisdom—to have them brought under the power of an education strictly Christian, which will exert a silent influence upon them for life—imbued with the philosophy of the church—trained by her intellectual principles, breathing in her atmosphere, or to have them cast off to be educated under the influence of infidelity, or even by teachers who live for this world alone? What an inconceivable difference it would make in this nation if all who studied law or medicine or became teachers had been educated in schools not controlled by the piety of the Church of God? . . . I have no hesitation in saying that the influence of Christian education upon these men is ample compensation for all the church has expended on that college, even if not a single minister had been educated. Would not a church forget herself greatly, were she alone to make provision for the spiritual education of her own children? Now this is precisely the principle on which she acts when she rears a college to educate her ministers and yet makes provision so ample that all the mind which is educated in the land may be trained under the most decided Christian influence." [18]

Nor did it escape attention that a collegiate type of Christian education invariably operated to the advantage of the elementary school. It was realized that the colleges and schools were inextricably linked together, and that to view the interests of different educational departments as opposed to each other only betrayed a misunderstanding of the true sphere and appropriate work of either; that they are all needed to promote a common purpose and that all succeed best when all are best sustained. It was remembered that, a few years after the founding of Harvard College, it had been ordered "that when any town shall increase to the number of one hundred families they

[18] Colleges Essential to the Church of God, Plain Letters Addressed to a Parishioner," pp. 16 and 17.

shall set up a grammar school, the master thereof being able to instruct youth as far as they may be fitted for the university." [14] The educators of the West saw the history of Harvard repeating itself in their own environment. The faculty of Wabash College testified—"colleges seem to us the illuminating centres so that if these could be assisted to act constantly and powerfully, all inferior schools would rise and prosper under their influence. We see this result now taking place largely and strikingly in the sphere over which this college exerts influence. Every advance we make is felt in every district and village school, in every educational interest far around us." [14] The instructors of Illinois College made the same observation,—"We hold that nothing can be done for the cause of general education in the West so efficient as to raise up and nurture into vigorous life a constellation of Western Colleges, constituted after the Puritan model and truly liberal in their course of instruction. . . . Our Colleges are the heart of the system of education. Colleges and Universities have been the educators of Christendom. No human power can create for this State a good system of common schools except by a slow and gradual process. Changes are to be wrought in the whole structure of society and to the rapid and certain production of these changes, a sound and vigorous college influence is indispensable. The real creating propelling power in a system of education descends rather than ascends." [15]

As the colleges were thus discovering little by little how to function most effectively in a newly established order of society, educationalists and church leaders were coming to an understanding *pari passu* of what constituted a distinctively Christian type of education. In a period of approximately twenty years, the argument for Christian education may be said to have been fully elaborated—as

[14] Bancroft, "History of the United States," Vol. I, p. 458.
[15] The Third Report of the Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education at the West, pp. 18 and 19.

fully, indeed, as it is today. In the colonial period, there does not appear to have been any such formulation of the value of a Christian education. There was no occasion therefor. It was the religious educationalists of the frontier who forced into the foreground this whole issue of the church's educational mission.

It may seem strange that an interpretation so satisfactory was formulated within such a brief period. Two factors may be offered in explanation. There was first the critical attitude of the East to the excessive multiplication of struggling frontier colleges. Some had been launched by enthusiasts who had failed to count the cost; some by communities foolishly seeking to rival each other: some under the mischievous handicap of being chartered as colleges, whereas in reality they were nothing more than academies. Whatever the cause, it was not long before the eastern churches found themselves deluged with frantic appeals for help. And the response of the East at first was a multitude of questions, challenging the wisdom of the whole college enterprise—Why must the church take the responsibility and expense of educating her ministry? Why may not Bibles and tracts suffice for the need of the frontier? Why may an able ministry not be trained by private teaching? Why must churches endow and rear colleges in which to educate laymen and physicians? Why provide education for rich men's sons in colleges reared to educate a ministry? Why must the West look to the East to aid her colleges? Is not too much money spent on buildings? These were a few of the inquiries raised by the open-minded and fault-finding.[16] And of course these questions had to be answered, and in framing a convincing reply the whole project of the Christian college was taken under closest scrutiny and viewed from every possible

[16] Others may be found by consulting "Colleges Essential to the Church of God. Plain Letters Addressed to a Parishioner in Behalf of the Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education at the West."

angle. If there was a weakness in the policy of the small college, it was certain to be uncovered; if there was strength, it could scarcely fail of demonstration. By the time questions were set at rest, the full bearings of Christian education had been expounded. Little, if anything, has been added to the argument for the small college during the last seventy-five years, simply because its critics, reasonable and querulous, drove their opponents to the full limits of its defense.

The second factor that helped the promoters of Christian colleges to grasp the significance of their work was the feverish unrelaxing effort of Romanism in multiplying her schools throughout the same area of the West. Thoughtful Protestants were likely to inquire why was it that Rome was thus spending such a vast amount of money in schools similar to their colleges? Obviously, it was not for the training of ministers; rather because, following the tradition of centuries, she hoped through the establishment of colleges to dominate the intellectual life of the whole country. Professor Post, of Illinois College, set it forth clearly:

"Colleges are a necessity of every extensive community marked by nature as a social unity. We are now to look at some reasons why they are peculiarly needed at the west. First, then, we find such a reason in the fact that Rome is at this time making unprecedented efforts to garrison this valley with her seminaries of education. She claims already to have within it between fifteen and twenty colleges and theological schools, and this number is rapidly increasing. . . . This policy of Rome is steadfast and profound and sagacious. Her aim, in effect, is at the whole educational effort. The college is naturally the heart of the whole. The lower departments necessarily draw life from them. If Rome, then, grasps the college in a system of western education, she virtually grasps the common school. . . . A system so deep and persistent must be met by a corresponding depth and persistency of

policy. Protestantism can no more counteract it by temporary and spasmodic effort than she can stop the Mississippi with a whirlwind. She can encounter it only by assistance of permanent and efficient Christian colleges. . . . A college alone can counteract a college. The college acts upon the public mind in a manner so peculiar through such ages and classes and such influences so various and subtle, so constant, noiseless and profound, that it can be successfully combated only by a similar institution." [17]

[17] The First Report of the Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education at the West, pp. 25-27.

CHAPTER V

THE SANCTUARY OF THE SMALL SECTS

America has come to be regarded as the asylum and nursery of the small religious sects. And not without reason. Church statistics confirm these characterizations. The census of 1916 contains returns from two hundred and two religious denominations. Of these less than one-fifth reported an aggregate membership each above one hundred thousand; seven-tenths of these bodies had less than ten thousand aggregate membership; two-fifths less than five thousand; one-fifth were unable to muster one thousand.

The figures are as follows:

Membership	over	100,000			35	bodies
"	between	50,000	and	100,000	10	"
"	"	25,000	"	50,000	16	"
"	"	10,000	"	25,000	18	"
"	"	5,000	"	10,000	22	"
"	"	1,000	"	5,000	82	"
"	under	1,000			42	"

A survey of the individual states gives the same testimony. In the East, Pennsylvania famed from earliest days for her devotion to religious liberty and rich in her agricultural and industrial resources, has attracted to her borders seventy-nine denominations each having less than ten thousand members. New York State with immense material resources and the attraction of her cosmopolitan city of New York, has practically as many. In proportion to church membership New Jersey has twice as many small religious bodies as has Pennsylvania. Connecticut, completely dominated in the beginning by Congregation-

alism, now has thirty of the small denominational bodies. Massachusetts, long ago rigorous in church uniformity, has gone the same way with half a hundred denominations. In spite of the rapid strides of Romanism, Rhode Island, immortalized through the "religious experiment of Roger Williams," has a sect for every two thousand Protestant church members. Virginia, once dominated by the Episcopalian parish system, today emerges with more than twoscore small bodies. Maryland, though strongly Romanist, has as large a number.

Passing over the mountains into areas that first felt the western movement of immigration, small religious bodies continue in abundance. Michigan, Ohio and Indiana have almost as many as Pennsylvania. Illinois, with her cosmopolitan city of Chicago, has more—the largest number, indeed, of any state of the Union. Wisconsin and Minnesota, though fortresses of Romanism, have room each for fifty. In proportion to church members the Dakotas far outdistance any state of the Middle West in their numbers of small denominations. Iowa and Kansas, representing a later stage in frontier extension than Ohio and Indiana, have caught up in the race for sect diversity.

In the South, however, the tendency toward small grouping has been less pronounced. Even in the border areas of Kentucky and Tennessee the difference is quite perceptible. In Georgia the size of the average religious group is almost three times as large as that of Iowa. Alabama has a group size four times as large as that of the Dakotas. The religious group of Mississippi is twice as large as that of Nebraska. Missouri and Texas, though showing relatively large bodies, have scores of numerically weak sects.

It is in the mountain regions that the small sect movement luxuriates most freely. Though under-peopled and undeveloped, these areas have their scores of newly established religious bodies—Colorado, 43; Oregon, 49; Montana, 40. Even Utah, so strongly held by the Latter Day

Saints, has 14 struggling rivals. With the liberalism characteristic of maritime districts, and their already large and growing cities, the coast states present a great variety of denominational life. Each has its scores of religious bodies—California, 65; Oregon, 49; Washington, 59.

The following table gives the number of denominations large and small, and the relative size of these groups for each of the states. Membership of the Roman Catholic church, the National Baptist Convention (Negro), and of the church of the Latter Day Saints is not included.[1]

States	*Denominations all sizes*	*Denominations 10,000 members and less*	*Size of religious group in proportion to aggregate church membership of the State*
Alabama	52	41	11,872
Arizona	20	28	1,699
Arkansas	47	37	8,892
California	74	65	5,463
Colorado	49	43	3,187
Connecticut	36	30	6,310
Delaware	17	15	4,737
Dist. of Columbia	29	25	4,035
Florida	50	41	5,204
Georgia	42	31	20,346
Idaho	36	33	1,798
Illinois	107	89	12,625
Indiana	89	72	10,284
Iowa	85	72	7,939
Kansas	77	68	6,334
Kentucky	56	44	11,099
Louisiana	36	28	5,898
Maine	33	29	3,333
Maryland	60	48	6,493
Massachusetts	60	51	9,454
Michigan	87	75	7,085
Minnesota	68	52	4,796

[1] In tabulating the religious bodies of the several states, the compiler of the census adopted the unsatisfactory practice of grouping some small organizations under the caption "All other denominations." How many bodies are included is not stated. The numbers of small denominations given above are therefore all slightly understated. In some cases it may be that the figures should be considerably increased.

States	*Denominations all sizes*	*Denominations 10,000 members and less*	*Size of religious group in proportion to aggregate church membership of the State*
Mississippi	39	31	10,719
Missouri	70	56	13,408
Montana	42	40	1,415
Nevada	8	8	1,057
Nebraska	64	56	4,845
New Hampshire	25	22	3,113
New Jersey	62	51	8,826
New Mexico	25	24	1,336
New York	93	77	16,880
North Carolina	49	33	18,098
North Dakota	44	40	3,024
Ohio	96	73	15,082
Oklahoma	62	54	5,577
Oregon	54	49	2,248
Pennsylvania	105	79	21,961
Rhode Island	46	42	1,799
South Carolina	31	22	17,955
South Dakota	46	41	2,820
Tennessee	58	46	12,612
Texas	63	48	17,309
Utah	16	14	1,445
Vermont	25	22	2,812
Virginia	61	49	11,208
Washington	66	59	2,866
West Virginia	56	45	6,573
Wisconsin	71	56	8,102
Wyoming	17	16	1,699

For present purposes, however, it is not sufficient to call attention to the fact that the multiplicity of denominations is a phenomenon appearing in all sections of America—South as well as North, maritime districts as well as inland, newly settled as well as long established. It is more to the point to determine whether or not this tendency to small grouping is the same relatively throughout the country. The fact that Indiana has 72 small bodies may be less significant than that Iowa has the same number. Rhode Island with 42 small-sized denominations may prove to be very different from Kentucky with its 44 bodies; so may Vermont with 22 small bodies when com-

pared with South Carolina, which has the same number. In these and other cases the point of interest is the aggregate church membership, the proportion between the number of groups in a given area and the number of church members within this same area. In other words, the size of the average group for given areas is the vital point.

In proceeding to find this average for the several states, two facts should not be overlooked. Romanism is a type of Christianity that in America and elsewhere has been able to protect itself almost entirely from differentiation. It has no sects. Its following, although so very substantial throughout almost all of America, should not therefore be included in our present reckoning. Racial and other factors have kept the negroes from extensive sectarian alignments. Denominationally they have kept largely by themselves. As a protection from misleading conclusions, statistics of negro-church membership should, therefore, be omitted.

In a study of this character state boundaries obviously have no significance. Boundary lines between Massachusetts and Rhode Island once represented a sharp cleavage in ecclesiastical polity and religious attitude of mind. The cleavage was almost as sharp between Virginia and Pennsylvania. But these differences have long melted away. That the group average for Rhode Island presents a marked contrast to that of New Jersey signifies nothing; neither that that of Pennsylvania is so much larger than that of Kentucky. These areas are all too limited to be used as a basis for comparison. Groupings should not be made in harmony with state boundaries that no longer have religious meaning; rather, according to the period of colonization and the prevailing characteristics of social and economic life. From this standpoint the seaboard colonies from Massachusetts to the Carolinas may be taken as a unit. Colonized about the same time, and today densely populated with an urban population, which is the

symbol of a highly advanced civilization, these states are now finding themselves confronted with much the same type of problem. Throughout this area, it will be found that there is one small group to every 11,516 church members. Proceeding westward to Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio and Indiana, the earliest of the frontier states, and during several decades of their development showing much homogeneity of interest, the number of church members per small group is only slightly less than that of the older seaboard area—11,232. The next region to be settled, and one that was largely rural in character with the exception of Chicago, embraced Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, Wisconsin, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi. Continuing its downward tendency, the group average in this area stands at 9,622. Then followed the settlement of Minnesota, the Dakotas, Nebraska, Arkansas and Oklahoma. For this district the group average takes a violent drop to 4,992. For the mountain territory that has only recently been passing out of its frontier stage—Arizona, Nevada, Montana, Colorado, Oregon, Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, Washington—the group average reaches its minimum at 1,823.

It appears, therefore, that in passing from older to newer communities, there is an increase in proportion of small religious denominations. As one moves toward the more newly developed areas one finds that the aggregate membership of the church is cut up more and more into small religious constituencies. Older and more highly advanced regions seem to have proved less inviting and hospitable to little groups. Their congenial refuge has been in the undeveloped and newly settled areas.

For several reasons the small sect has been impelled to make its home on the frontier. Its followers are usually in moderate or straitened circumstances. Dissent and protest against conventional ways of religious thinking rarely develop among the leisurely and comfortable. Hardship and the sense of social injustice have had much

to do with stimulating religious and theological reactions. On the lookout for material betterment, sectaries are therefore liable to respond to the lure of cheap land and to appreciate the large returns accruing to thrift and toil in undeveloped regions. Moreover, their group-consciousness is strong. They prefer to remain together. In long-established settlements they may have opportunity perchance to purchase land and equipment at bargain prices from residents who wish to retire or who are moving farther west. They are likely, however, in so doing to have to separate. Worshiping together as a group thereby becomes difficult for them, and often impracticable. A language of their own perhaps shuts them in from intercourse with their neighbors. On the frontier things are quite different. They may homestead or purchase their land at nominal prices. They may appropriate a large area all to themselves and thereby be able to live together as a community. Their church may be located within easy access to all. The language of their fathers they may continue to enjoy without handicap or discomfort.

Maybe their religious views impose customs that in the vogue of more fashionable society seem peculiar and are likely to provoke ridicule. Why suffer embarrassment under the eye of neighbors whose scorn or complacent toleration indicates only a worldly attitude of mind? Why not get away from worldly-minded people, and in some new settlement, maintain unchallenged and unquestioned what a sensitive conscience imposes?

It must be conceded also that aggressive denominationalism has not been slow to detect the strategic advantage of capturing the newly settled areas. "Get on the ground" has been the slogan of many a sect that, arriving too late in the East to successfully establish itself under the shadow of large and wealthy bodies, has determined to make better history in the West by entrenching itself before the real rivalries of more advanced settlements set in. Not only have individual missionaries hastened to the frontier as a

fertile zone for proselytizing, but groups *en bloc* have shown a disposition to establish themselves in frontier communities, where through rapidly acquired material resources and plastic social environment, they may more effectively propagate their distinctive tenets.

The force of these considerations will be felt by a reference to the history of a few small religious bodies. One of the earliest evidences of the lure of the American wilderness appears in the landing, June, 1694, in Germantown, of the Theosophical Fraternity of Perfection, which made its way to the overshadowing ridge hard by the Wissahickon, some three miles away from a crude but forward-moving civilization. There on a commanding eminence of nature, Kilpius, Falkner, Koster, Seelig, and others, ensconced themselves in their log cabin, from the roof of which in ceaseless vigils they made celestial observations, in expectation of the millennium and the advent of the Woman of the Wilderness. In the cool retreat of hemlock and pine, they gave themselves to meditation, exoteric speculation and some social ministry to their fellows. In the training of children, they made the earliest attempt to erect and maintain a charitable institution for religious and moral instruction within the bounds of Pennsylvania.[2] In growing and acclimating medicinal herbs, they were probably the first to raise European plants for curative purposes in America.[3] Tradition connects these brethren with the type-setting of the early Jansen imprints.[4] The destiny of the red men gave them some concern, though not to the point of actual missionary contact. Ten reposeful years thus passed away broken only by the secession of a few into the "House of Peace." Then came the impact of civilization. Millenarian calculations lost their interest. Celibacy became too vigorous for some.

[2] Sachse, "The German Pietists of Provincial Pennsylvania, 1694 to 1708," p. 74.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 75. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

The civil and political struggles of Germantown attracted others. The challenge to minister to pastorless congregations enticed the Falkner brothers. The communal principle was abandoned. No new converts were made, nor indeed, vigorously sought after. The few who survived, refusing to concede the abortiveness of their enterprise, clung to its attenuated form of hermitism. Nevertheless, they saw the utter hopelessness of attempting to "carry on" in the environs of a growing town. Themselves too old to face the hardships of removing to a new site, they gave their counsel and encouragement to younger and sturdier ones. Ephrata, deeper in the wilds, became the torch of revived theosophy and mysticism.

Conrad Beissel, mystically inclined through the influence of Boehm and others, in 1721 turned his footsteps to the Conestoga country, then sparsely settled, in order to realize his ideal of hermitic living. Becoming more pronouncedly mystical through his oversight of a Dunkard congregation, he retired some ten years later still farther into the wilderness to a place called Ephrata. Members of his former congregation soon began to remove to the same region. The unmarried, male and female, dwelt in separate huts; the married proceeded to practice continence. Reacting against the loose sexual relations of the frontier, they decided to renounce entirely all normal wedded ways. The dangers of the wilderness, the difficulty of clearing land and farming with poor equipment induced coöperation. Thus in a short time a communal system was established. From the impact of its frontier surroundings, this community step by step developed its distinctive features. But by and by, civilization was at the door. The Eckerlin brothers seeing its approach were quick to perceive that the mendicant support of the unmarried would have to be abandoned. Hence the erection of a bake-house, mills of various character, a tannery, and perhaps a pottery. The Eckerlins would have adapted the community to its changed environment. But they

were looked upon by the community as worldly minded. Outvoted, there was nothing left for them to do but to abandon their policy. Surrounded by progress, this community deliberately chose to remain stationary, and it paid the price. Decay immediately set in. More vigorous leadership was unable to arrest the disintegration. Its membership, decreased and scattered, after a century was compelled to resort to proxy voting. All that remains of the Ephrata communism is its control of the property.

The lesson of it all is clear. Ephrata came into existence as a reaction against the low moral and social standards of frontier conditions. And its ideals perished with the surroundings that gave them birth. Unable to frame new ideals for a changed environment, it forfeited its right to live. Created and protected by a frontier society, it passed out before a higher type of civilization.

Meanwhile the Dunkers, whom Beissel had found to be uncongenial and intractable, were pushing their way from Germantown into the back regions where free lands were available. Fifteen congregations had established themselves in the wilderness by 1770. At the close of the Revolution, their churches soon sprang up in Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas.[5] From the Carolinas they proceeded into Kentucky, where Joseph Rodgers, one of their preachers, may have been the first white Gospel missionary in that state. From Virginia, others crossed into Greenbrier and Washington Counties, Tennessee. Some moved to the Miami Valley in Ohio. Thirty years later, Indiana received its first Dunker settlers. By 1824 some had reached Illinois, where by the middle of the century, they established several settlements. Missouri was colonized by them in the beginning of the century. A Dunker church was organized in Iowa by 1840. Oregon was penetrated as early as 1852, and California four years later. This aggressive westward movement seems to have been due not only to the desire for cheaper land but also

[5] Brumbaugh, "History of the Bretheran," p. 335.

to the petty jealousies of ministers who, continuing to farm after they had begun to preach, induced their friends to follow them into new districts where ministerial competition would not have to be confronted.[6] Retaining the German language, rigidly maintaining the practices of triune immersion and foot-washing, vigorously opposed to war and expensive apparel, they were able to sustain a deep group consciousness and sense of unlikeness to their fellows.

Their one original body has now become five. Of these the latest (Church of God) has its following only in Indiana. Pennsylvania still has many of these Dunkers, specially of the Conservatives. The strength, however, of Dunkerism lies west of the Alleghenies. Not over forty per cent of its members remain in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. It is too much to claim that the westward movement saved the Dunkers from extinction in America. They have been able to maintain a strong foothold in Pennsylvania. Their substantial growth, however, has been in the West.

The Schwenkfelders, whose testimony in several particulars agrees with that of the Dunkers, arrived in Philadelphia in 1734. Finding it impossible to settle as a distinct community, they secured their holdings in the adjacent counties of Montgomery, Berks and Lehigh. Given to plainness of dress and homes, worshipping in severely modest meeting-houses, featuring a clannish exclusiveness, opposing war and all secret organizations, providing a fixed remuneration for the minister, and cherishing progressive ideals in the matter of the religious education of their children, these people have been able to retain their group identity right through to the present. Unlike the Dunkers, they have shown no disposition to move westward. Neither have their numbers increased in any large proportion. The two hundred of 1734 appears as seven hundred and twenty-five in 1905. Realizing the

[6] Gillin, "The Dunkers. A Sociological Interpretation," p. 152.

seriousness of an advancing civilization that accentuated more and more their peculiarities, within recent years they have been accommodating themselves to their surroundings, specially in the matter of houses, church structures and college-trained leaders. This probably accounts for a substantial growth in the decennial period, 1906-1916. One wonders if frontier environment, operating on them as it did on the Dunkers, would not have multiplied several times the number of the original group.

It was in the mountain district of Tennessee and Kentucky that the Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Baptists established themselves in protest against what seemed a laxity of Arminian Methodism. Today they have feeble outposts in Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Alabama, Arkansas and Texas, which they could scarcely have held save for the strength of their following in the almost inaccessible regions of their original base in Kentucky and Tennessee.

In the mountain regions of Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia and Alabama, the Duck River Association of Baptists, unable to fall in line with the rigid ideas of the Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit group, and holding essentially the same views as the Separate Baptists, largely because of geographical isolation, have been driven to a distinct organization which they have been able to maintain. The General Baptists, sent into the Cumberland region by their parent organizations in North Carolina, to resist absorption by the Calvinistic Baptists, established themselves in Indiana while it was in its frontier stage. From that base they pushed their church outposts into several of the mid-western states. The Separate Baptists, a branch of the Sandy Creek Association, settled in frontier times in Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois. Hindered by the difficulty of communication from association with other groups of Baptists, they have survived in these regions.

The fact that so many different bodies of Baptists have thus arisen and persisted in their separate organizations is to be accounted for not only on the ground of the lack of a

centralized type of church government, but more particularly, because they chose to operate in new and comparatively inaccessible regions, where segregation was easy, and differentiation in thought and practice liable to become permanent.

Upon the Mennonites probably more than upon any other group of related Christian sects, the undeveloped West exercised its spell. A poor folk when they reached Germantown, like the Dunkers, they needed free land, however hazardous might be the trek into the distant interior. In one respect they were especially fortunate. As with the Quakers their principle of non-resistance proved highly effective in allaying the prejudices and warding off the hostility of Indians, who rarely disturbed them in their holdings. In their westward movement they took a northerly direction, avoiding Kentucky and Tennessee. Passing through the Ohio Valley, they pressed on to the fringe of settlement. Several colonies, mostly from Russia, in the last half century proceeded into the northwest central area, direct from Europe, rather than by moving slowly in an interrupted process of colonization through Pennsylvania. Their present distribution, like that of the Dunkards, shows a tenacious hold upon Pennsylvania. East of the Alleghenies they have approximately one-third of their entire church membership—a smaller proportion, it is to be observed, than have the Dunkers in the same area. Settlement in undeveloped districts has been an outstanding feature of Mennonite expansion. Variation is another characteristic of theirs. All told, America has 16 varieties of Mennonites. Of these Kansas has representatives from 12; the Dakotas, Michigan, Ohio and Indiana from 8; Nebraska from 7; Minnesota, Oklahoma and Illinois from 6; California, Montana and Oregon from 5; Wisconsin and Missouri from 4. The South has had comparatively little attraction for the Mennonites. With their predominately agricultural interests and their acclimation to temperate and cold

zones, only a few organizations are to be found in Maryland and Virginia, with scarcely any in North Carolina, Tennessee, Louisiana and Arkansas.

Lutheranism, although so effective in building up large, unified Communions, has also shown some tendency toward sectionalism. Of its twenty-one bodies, two-thirds have each less than a hundred thousand members, and eight are each considerably under a ten thousand membership. Several factors have contributed to this division in its forces. To a greater degree than in the case of the Mennonites, immigration has transferred large numbers of Lutherans from Europe directly to the unoccupied western territories, rather than through a gradual western movement by way of Pennsylvania and other seaboard regions. Coming from areas in Europe widely separated by geography, traditions and language, these immigrants in several instances, have found themselves even farther removed from each other in America, and shut in quite as much by the barrier of their mother-tongue. Difficulty of communication has made for variations in doctrinal emphasis, and a synodical type of church government that has militated against a unification of Lutheranism. It therefore, comes to pass that these divided Lutheran bodies abound in the central west. Hauge's Norwegian Evangelical Synod hasn't a church east of Michigan. The Norwegian Evangelical Lutherans have less than five per cent of their communicants east of the Alleghenies. Eilsen's Synod draws its entire membership from Wisconsin, Minnesota and South Dakota. The Synod of Iowa lacks an organization of any kind east of Ohio. The Danish Lutherans have eighty-five per cent of their following in Michigan and westward. The Icelandic Lutherans are confined to Minnesota, North Dakota and Washington. The Finnish Evangelicals have only ten per cent of their membership along the Atlantic seaboard. The Norwegian Finnish church is not represented east of Michigan. Ninety-six per cent of the United Danish Lutherans is

west of Ohio. The Apostolic Finnish Lutherans are almost entirely confined to Michigan and the western states.

Another body that is unable to qualify as a large denomination is the Quakers. Neither in point of numbers nor influence have they today in America the relative significance that they had two hundred years ago. Rhode Island, that in the seventeenth century elected three Quaker State Governors, has now a Quaker membership only slightly in excess of half a thousand. In South Carolina, once notorious for the Quaker administration of Governor Archdale and his Council, not a vestige of Quakerism remains. Some of the audiences that greeted George Fox in his travels through Maryland and Virginia must have been as large or even larger than the present-day Quaker membership of these states. The Quakers of New Jersey in 1916 were only twice as many as they were in 1681. Pennsylvania, that in 1700 had twoscore Quaker congregations, at the end of two centuries of its history reports only approximately twelve thousand membership. Fifty years ago there were three times as many Quakers in Pennsylvania and New Jersey as there are now.

To examine the various causes that account for this eclipse in Quakerism lies beyond our present task. Only one calls for consideration in this study—immigration. In America, the Quakers have shown much of the pioneering instinct.[7] This impulse has been partly due to the promptings of their mysticism that ever craves for greater expansion. Perhaps Quakers caught some of their travel interest from their preachers who itinerated so widely in taking the Gospel to the spiritually destitute. Their dislike for slavery had much to do in directing many to the Ohio Valley. The failure of the whale fisheries in New England compelled many to move elsewhere. This mi-

[7] Daniel Boone was reared and trained in a Quaker home. "Thwaite, Daniel Boone," Chap. I.

gratory tendency appeared first in the South. As early as the opening of the eighteenth century, Quakers seem to have disappeared from certain sections of Virginia and to have gone West.[8] Some also from North Carolina felt the same impulse. Then came the "Replanting of Southern Quakerism" in Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia, caused by movements from Nantucket, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.[9] This migration gave promise of completely transforming the South. Unfortunately, it was checked by the Revolutionary War. After the Revolution, it turned West rather than South. The home communities of Quakers tried to check this westward outgoing by refusing to give recognition to newly organized Meetings, but to no effect. First near the Holstein River, then in the north, and southwest of Ohio, later in the Whitewater Valley of Indiana, settlements were established before the Civil War. Some Quakers pressed much farther on. Iowa Quakerism was planted in 1835 and a Yearly Meeting established in 1860.[10] Not long afterward organizations were set up in Nebraska, Mississippi and along the Pacific seaboard.

The old eastern strongholds of Quakerism have lost their strategic significance. Pennsylvania has had to surrender its premier place to Ohio, which in turn has later been completely overshadowed by the much larger Quaker constituency of Indiana. Kansas and Iowa have approximately as many Quakers as North Carolina. Idaho has more Quakers than Rhode Island; so also has Oregon more than Maryland. What immigration has done for Quakerism may be epitomized in the statement that two-thirds of its followers are now west of the Alleghenies. Indiana and Ohio alone have more numerical strength than all the eastern seaboard states combined. With the exception of North Carolina, the seaboard Quaker groups

[8] Weeks, "Southern Quakers and Slavery," p. 85.
[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 96-125.
[10] Jones, "The Quakers of Iowa," Chaps. IV and V.

are not holding their own. Fifteen years ago a Quaker historian predicted that, having cast aside some of its oddities and having relaxed its discipline, continuing the process of rejuvenation that set in after the Civil War, Quakerism could be counted upon to come back into its former commanding religious influence. Taking the last thirty years as a basis, this prophecy has little if any confirmation. In the East the gains in Quakerism have been insignificant. In the Middle West, where life has become highly socialized, the gains are almost as small. Only in the north mountain and Pacific areas has progress been substantial. Quakerism shows that in new districts where environment favors grouped settlements and is not critical as to distinctive social customs, it may make material headway. In older areas it seems to be fighting a losing battle.

It is to the frontier that communistic societies, almost without exception, have turned. The Amana Community settled first near Buffalo. Thirteen years later, feeling the need of more land, it removed to Iowa and has there remained until this day. Twenty-five miles north of Pittsburg, in a region then comparatively virgin, Harmonists settled. Farther to the west, a little later (1817), the Separatists of Zoar located. The Perfectionists of Oneida, alone of communistic groups, faced the contact of well developed civilization, due probably to their New England ancestry and their comparatively easy circumstances. Far to the West in Bethel, Missouri, Dr. Keil located (1844) his disciples and seceding Economists. Later he transferred part of his community to Aurora, Oregon. Kansas had its experiment in the Cedarvale Community, and Illinois its short-lived enterprise in the settlement of the Bishop Hill Swedish colony. By far the most notable were the Shakers, who, although establishing themselves in scattered units throughout Maine, Massachusetts and Connecticut, took up their main operations near Albany in a region then described as "almost a wilderness." Large

settlements were made later in southwest Ohio, and near the present site of Cleveland, at that time entirely undeveloped. As civilization has continued to press upon the two distinctively religious groups of Inspirationalists at Amana and the Shakers, it has been found impossible by them to hold their own. The Inspirationalists, whose immigration in the first two years numbered almost five hundred, have only trebled their following in seventy-five years of struggle. The Shakers, who had more than two thousand members over a century ago, have now dwindled to less than four hundred.

Having shown the magnetic influence of unappropriated frontier land in attracting small religious sects to the West, it remains to briefly consider what effect the transformation of unsettled outposts into a highly developed state of society is likely to have upon these bodies.

Some groups, it has been observed above, have been unable to resist the pressure of civilization. The Brotherhood of Perfection, the Brethren of the Solitary, and the Shakers, have entirely disappeared, or left only remnants destined soon to join the extinct. Not so, however, with all the small sects. Some of these survive in the midst of the long-established civilization of the East. Though large numbers of Mennonites are today scattered throughout the Central and Middle West, more than one half of this body remains solidly entrenched in Pennsylvania. Nor is this section composed only of those who have liberalized their theological views or renounced their social peculiarities. In part, the Pennsylvania Mennonites are liberals. The Mennonite Church, by far the largest of the Mennonite bodies, and conservatively progressive in its viewpoint, draws more than fifty per cent of its following from Pennsylvania. In part, however, the Pennsylvanian Mennonites are conservative. The Old Order Amish, a strictly conservative group, has one-seventh of its membership in Pennsylvania, and five-

sevenths in the combined states of Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana. The Old Order Wisler section, with an extreme conservatism, that opposes Sunday schools, missions and higher education, has considerably more than one-half of its following in Pennsylvania. It is similar with the Dunkers. More than twenty-five per cent of their entire membership remains in Pennsylvania, and almost seventy thousand in the long-established area of Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana. Some of these are progressive; and some are conservative. The progressives who favor schools, colleges, newspapers, and modern methods of church work, have almost one-third of their constituents in Pennsylvania, and three eighths of their membership in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana. The extremely conservative group—the Old Order—is also represented—ten per cent in Pennsylvania and sixty-six per cent in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana. The conservatives, holding an intermediate position between the progressives and the ultra-conservative, with a membership exceeding either, muster more than one-fourth of their following in Pennsylvania, and one-half in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana.

From these facts it seems clear that any prediction of an early lessening of the number of small sects, due to the increasing pressure of highly socialized life, may prove erroneous. A small sect, though isolated for years, with little to develop its consciousness of social unlikeness, and to stimulate propaganda, does not, however, necessarily become enervated or complacent. Enveloped at length and pressed by civilization, it is able to rally itself at least for self-defense, and sometimes for a spirited propaganda. Often it successfully copes with the critical task of abandoning a foreign vernacular and adopting the English language. Its younger people, though emancipated and fascinated by the social contacts associated with the acquirement of the English language, are not necessarily torn away from the faith and religious prac-

tices of their fathers. Several groups of Mennonites and Dunkers, though using exclusively or extensively the English language, have been more than holding their own. Moreover, the pressure of socialized life, inducing a deeper sense of social unlikeness, impels some groups to greater conservatism of thought, a more unbrotherly application of church discipline, and a rigid insistence upon peculiarities of dress. And yet strange as it may seem, these groups live on. Some, indeed, seem to prosper because of their conservative reaction. With other groups the impact of civilization acts as a liberalizing and socializing leaven. When once they have emerged from the initial anxieties of paying for land and building their homes, these begin to think of schools, newspapers, modern church structures and methods, missions, and even interdenominational comity. And yet they, too, like the ultra-conservatives, preserve their identity. They take from, yet they are not lost in their environment.

The absorption of the small sects of America does not seem, therefore, to be an impending result of the recent closing of the frontier phase of our history. Cheap land and isolation have proved the economic and social bulwark of many struggling religious bodies. By these they have been nursed into stability and vigor. By and by a civilization mellowed with culture, refinement, social convention and ivy-covered institutions may create among these sects a sense of discomfort and discouragement. That day, however, does not seem to lie in the immediate future. Such as seek the elimination of small sects do well to put their confidence not so much in the relentless pressure of socializing processes, as in the growing sentiment of Christian coöperation and union. Here, there is much to hearten. Dunkers and Mennonites, Lutherans and others, are discovering traditions, teachings and practices, common to their several bodies. Some of their divisions indeed, represent attempts to effect coöperation and union. In the Lutheran body, in particular, a scheme of union bids

fair to eliminate much of its geographical and linguistic sectionalism.

If the advocate of church union finds little to comfort him in the persistency and growth of small sects in the vast stretches of what yesterday was outpost territory, it is likely to only add to his distress to remind him that the cities as well as the prairies and mountain regions seem to provide the isolation and irresponsibility conducive to the multiplication of new religious bodies. Chicago has more small sects than the whole state of Nebraska or the old area of Virginia and Maryland combined. New York City has almost as many. Philadelphia has more than fifty bodies that lack a thousand members apiece. If it must be regretfully conceded that the towns and small cities of the Middle and Farther West have been notoriously given to the multiplication of churches to care for their small population, it is well to remember that new sects are constantly springing up in the recesses of our metropolitan life. The city as well as the frontier has been, and continues to be, the sanctuary of the small sects.

CHAPTER VI

CHURCH COÖPERATION AND RIVALRY

In removing to new scenes of residence, people are unlikely to completely retain the habits and mental attitude of their former place of abode. A change in environment is usually productive of a changed outlook upon life. Fresh impulses are awakened, new interests are quickened, and prejudices are dissipated when men are placed in altered surroundings. This is no less true of groups than of individuals nor of religion than of culture and politics.

One of the earliest chapters in American religious history forcibly illustrates this fact. As the headlines of their island home faded from their wistful view, Francis Higginson, expressing the feeling of his fellow voyagers, exclaimed, "We will not say, as the Separatists were wont to say at their leaving of England, 'Farewell, Babylon!' . . . but . . . 'farewell, the Church of God in England!' We do not go to New England as separatists from the Church of England; though we cannot but separate from the corruptions in it." [1] The affection of the Puritan to a purified Church of England comes out more clearly in *The Humble Request of his Majestie's loyall Subjects, . . . to the rest of their Brethren in and of the Church of England:—*

"We desire you would be pleased to take notice of the principals and body of our Company, as those who esteem

[1] See Walker, "A History of the Congregationalist Churches in the United States," p. 99.

it our honor to call the Church of England, from whence we rise, our dear mother; and cannot part from our native country, where she specially resideth, without much sadness of heart and many tears in our eyes, ever acknowledging that such hope and part as we have obtained in the common salvation, we have received in her bosom, and sucked it from her breasts. We leave it not, therefore, as loathing that milk wherewith we were nourished there; but, blessing God for the parentage and education, as members of the same body, shall always rejoice in her good, and unfeignedly grieve for any sorrow that shall ever betide her, and while we have breath, sincerely desire and endeavor the continuance and abundance of her welfare, with the enlargement of her bounds in the Kingdom of Christ Jesus." [2]

Evidently it was far from the intention of the Puritans when they left England to have anything whatever to do with the schismatic separatists that dwelt at Plymouth Rock. But a trifling misadventure was soon to carry them far beyond their intention. Sickness having developed in their midst at Massachusetts Bay, Governor Endicott, despite "the commone reporte touching" their "judgments of the outward forme of Gods Worshipe" turned to Governor Bradford for the services of his physician, Doctor Fuller. Not the least important aspect of Fuller's visit to Salem was that Endicott discovered that "Gods people are all marked with one and the same mark, and sealed with one and the same seale, and have for the maine, one and the same harte, guided by one and the same spirit of truth," also that the worship of the Pilgrims at the Rock was the same that he had "proffessed and maintained ever since the Lord in mercie revealed himselfe" unto him, "being farr from the commone reporte that hath been spread touching that perticuler." Two months later, a remarkable event transpired. At an assem-

[2] See Author's "Sourcebook," p. 62.

bly of citizens at Salem, after prayer and examination of candidates in respect of an "inward and outward calling," they proceeded themselves to choose and ordain a pastor and teacher. Charles Gott thus describes this memorable event:—

"The 20. of July, it pleased the Lord to move the hart of our Governor to set it aparte for a solemne day of humiliation for the choyce of a pastor and teacher. The former parte of the day being spente in praier and teaching, the latter parte aboute the election, which was after this maner. The persons thought on (who had been ministers in England) were demanded concerning their callings; they acknowledged ther was a towfould calling, the one an inward calling, when the Lord moved the harte of a man to take that calling upon him, and fitted him with guiftes for the same; the second was an outward calling, which was from the people, when a company of beleevers are joyned togither in covenante, to walke togither in all the ways of God, and every member (being men) are to have a free voyce in the choyce of their officers. Now, we being persuaded that these 2. men were so qualified . . . we saw noe reason but we might freely give our voyces for their election, after this triall. So Mr. Skelton was chosen pastor and Mr. Higgison to be teacher; and they accepting the choyce, Mr. Higgison, with, 3 or 4 of the gravest members of the church, laid their hands on Mr. Skelton, using praier therwith. This being done, ther was imposission of hands on Mr. Higgison also." [3]

Forgetful of the loyal assurances of Higginson that no project lay nearer their hearts than the planting in Massachusetts Bay of a Church of England unencumbered by extra-scriptural corruption, these Puritans in the course of a couple of months proceeded to completely set aside the idea of Orders, a foundation principle of the ecclesiastical structure of Anglicanism. In the choice and ordina-

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

tion of church officers, the administration of discipline, the use of a covenant and the conduct of their worship, these ardent Church of Englanders fell into complete accord with the hitherto contemned group of schismatic church idealists at Plymouth Rock.

This development, aptly phrased as the "congregationalizing of Puritanism," so entirely out of line with the original design of the Puritans, is not difficult to explain. In the atmosphere of a new and unlooked-for situation, traditions and prejudices are wont to be set aside, a truer scale of values emerges, human estimates become more kindly, and unanticipated problems tend to develop open-mindedness and resourcefulness.

Slightly more than a century later an incident of similar character appeared in Pennsylvania, into which because of its enlightened policy of religious tolerance large numbers of European sects had immigrated. Henry Antes of the German Reformed Church issued (December, 1741) a circular inviting members of all denominations to attend a general meeting in Germantown, "not for the purpose of disputing but in order to treat peaceably concerning the most important Articles of Faith and to ascertain how far we all might agree in the most essential points for the purpose of promoting mutual love and forbearance." [4] Shortly after, a considerable number of delegates representing nine religious bodies assembled in what was the first attempt in America to lay the basis of a harmonious fellowship among Christians. One would like to believe that it was a project of this kind that prompted Zinzendorf's determination to visit Pennsylvania,—that in the frontier stage of this colony he hoped most effectively to carry forward his Catholic mission of unifying Christianity. This inference is not at all at variance with the sentiments expressed in his diary, nor

[4] Reichel, "The Early History of the Church of the United Lutheran . . . in North America"—"Publication of the Moravian Historical Society," Vol. III, p. 97.

indeed with the disclaimer in which he definitely stated that he was neither the author nor adviser of the Pennsylvania Synods.[5] Whether or not the initiative in this conference lay with Henry Antes, John Bechtel, and others, Zinzendorf threw himself into hearty coöperation even though in the first session he found himself playing the rôle of an accused person defending himself against accusations laid upon him by several sects. Elected in the second session to the presiding office of Syndic he was able to keep the subject of the unity of the Church in the foreground of five conferences, the last of which placed itself on record as the "undenominational" synod of Pennsylvania, and issued a circular to the whole country inviting all the children of God to join the "Church of God in the Spirit." A church council to meet every three months was resolved upon as the instrument for conserving the good fruits of these conferences.[6] Unfortunately, Zinzendorf decided to devote the remaining portion of his short sojourn in America to visitation among the Indians. Sailing for England shortly after the last session of the Conference, no one remained in Pennsylvania equal to the delicate task of keeping the sects in contact with each other at the critical moment when an awakening of the

[5] "I was neither the author nor adviser of those meetings, which were called by . . . who had become tired of their new ways. What the object of these meetings may have been I am not able to determine. I should almost think that every deputy had his own instructions. What my ultimus fines was I know well enough and have not for a moment endeavored to conceal. I wished to make use of this opportunity."

[6] Zinzendorf thus speaks of the fruit of these conferences: "All of us taken together constitute the body of Jesus, which was recognized as such in the first conference of all denominations; acknowledged anew in the second Synod; sealed in the third; opened in the fourth; administered in the fifth and sixth; and in the seventh and last general conference of denominations cheered by the presence of a visible Church of Jesus. We intend to continue holding this Church Council every quarter of a year, with all quietness, according to the wisdom which the Lord will grant. Our members will assist; for as regards externals all are called and spiritually all are known. Whoever belongs to the Lord let him come to us!" Reichel, as above, p. 111.

Lutheran denominational consciousness was beginning to stimulate sectarianism among the smaller bodies. No more Conferences met. The work of Zindendorf so auspiciously launched remains only as a prophecy of what, under capable leadership, might have been accomplished in the way of effecting Christian union among settlers newly domiciled in America.

A year and a half after Zinzendorf on his departure had committed the cause of the "Church of God in the Spirit" into the hands of the newly arrived band of Moravian brethren, negotiations towards denominational union opened in another quarter. The Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, already burdened with missionary appeals from Poland, Surania, Java and elsewhere, finding another claimant for assistance in the German Reformed cause of Pennsylvania, raised the inquiry as to the possibility of effecting a union between the Presbyterians in America, the Dutch Reformed, and the German Reformed churches. From the outset, the Presbyterians cordially endorsed this proposition in the hope that through union it might be possible to provide a school where young men from these several religious bodies might be trained together for the urgent mission of ministering to the increasing thousands of new settlers sorely in need of preaching. It was John Boehm, the leading minister of the German Reformed Church, solicitous for liturgical forms and the Heidelberg Confession of Faith, who opposed and blocked this project. After his death some years later, the issue of union was reopened through the broader-minded leadership of his successor, Michael Schlatter. In America, all difficulties were smoothed away preparatory to union, when unfortunately, the North Holland Synod drew back from fellowship with the "Whitefieldian" Pietistic tendencies of the American Presbyterians. Left to themselves, the Dutch and German Reformed Churches in America would have found in their urgent needs for ministers and their Calvinistic heritage

of faith and tradition, a basis of union with the Presbyterians. A union that would have had far reaching political effect in connection with the Revolution, failed to materialize because the prejudices and traditionalism of the Old Land were imposed upon the practical and generous impulses of the New.[7]

Thus it appears that even during the colonial period when the religious strifes and persecutions of Europe were driving to our shores groups eagerly bent upon retaining their distinctive ideals and practices, an impulse was operating toward a better understanding and cooperation among them. Life in a new country with its hard struggle for existence and its kindly contact of neighborly settlements proved to be a partial dissolvent of rancorous memories and antipathies imported from across the seas.

But it was when the second, third, and later generations found themselves in the interior on the frontier that sectarian prejudices received a more severe shock. Unlike their fathers who had been living in communities where the vast majority of citizens were connected with one prevailing denomination, on the frontier, families representing various church affiliations found themselves thrown together in the same community. In their removal from the East, few had been impelled by religious considerations. They had gone westward not as religious groups concerned supremely with the perpetuation of some type of church or creed, but as individuals and households, seeking the best opportunities for material betterment. When the missionary appeared in the newly settled district, a social almost as much as a religious impulse impelled neighbors regardless of all denominational preferences to a rendezvous of community worship. In the earliest days, it was in a settler's log cabin that the neigh-

[7] This movement for union has been well presented with full documentary material by Professor James I. Good in the "Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society," Vol. III, pp. 129-137.

bors congregated to sing hymns, and to listen to an exhortation colored in some measure by the denominational affiliation of the preacher. Folks thus worshipping together for months or even years, and finding so much social satisfaction in their assemblies, could scarcely retain a strongly sectarian bias. In church fellowships and contacts forced upon them by the inaccessibility to a church of their own choice, many discovered how ill-grounded were their denominational prejudices, and how much there was in common among even the most widely separated divisions of the Christian community. As the settlement advanced and the log cabin gave place to the schoolhouse as a more accessible and better equipped meeting house, the process of interdenominationalizing the sectarian mind of the community went on apace. Many a frontiersman, too shy to join in a neighbor's cottage prayer meeting, was glad to make his way to hear a preacher in the schoolhouse. As likely as not, one of the deepest impressions made upon him by an uplifting hour of worship was that in the essentials of religion one denomination hadn't much superiority over another.

In diffusing the sentiment of Christian fellowship, the camp meeting far surpassed the assembly of neighbors in the log cabin, or the more conventional worship in the schoolhouse. And this not only because of the vastly larger numbers that flocked for miles to the great religious event of the year, but more especially because preachers of different denominations united to conduct the religious exercises upon the camp ground. The camp ground was not a religious rallying centre where Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists held forth in successive rival propaganda. Nor was it the custom to assign to Methodists, Presbyterians or Baptists certain periods of the day or sections of the ground in which each was to have control of worship and preaching. Sectarianism was completely submerged as preachers of different faiths and church affiliations relieved each other on the same platform, or

when the audience became too large for the range of one speaker's voice, provided simultaneous exhortations in separated areas of the camp enclosure. It was not unusual for a Methodist exhorter to be holding forth in one end of the ground while a Presbyterian was bearing his testimony in the other. In the opening years of the nineteenth century when the camp-meeting movement was at its height, the camp ground was rarely the arena of theological debate or sectarian glorification.

It was not strange, therefore, that in the camp ground regions of the frontier where thousands each year were wont to meet in happy Christian accord, the Barton-W.-Stone-Movement of protest against church partyism developed so spontaneously and vigorously. Wearied with the obstructions imposed by theological niceties, and distressed over the numerous divisions among Christians, due to human creeds and forms of church government, the newly organized Springfield Presbytery, realizing that it was adding another to the divisions of the Church, drafted its "Last Will and Testament" in the hope that inspired by its example, other sects might "retire from the din and fury of contending parties and die the death." In the *Witnesses' Address* their reasons for dissolving their Presbytery were stated as follows:—

"With deep concern they viewed the divisions, and party spirit among professing Christians, principally owing to the adoption of human creeds and forms of government. While they were united under the name of a Presbytery, they endeavored to cultivate a spirit of love and unity with all Christians; but found it extremely difficult to suppress the idea that they themselves were a party separate from others. This difficulty increased in proportion to their success in the ministry. Jealousies were excited in the minds of other denominations; and a temptation was laid before those who were connected with the various parties, to view them in the same light. As

they proceeded in the investigation . . . they soon found that there was neither precept nor example in the New Testament for such confederacies as modern Church Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, General Assemblies, etc. Therefore, from a principle of love to Christians of every name, the precious cause of Jesus, and dying sinners who are kept from the Lord by the existence of sects and parties in the church, they have cheerfully consented to retire from the din and fury of conflicting parties—sink out of the view of fleshly minds and die the death." [8]

Just about the same time that camp meetings and assembly groups in schoolhouses and log cabins were providing an atmosphere for Christian fellowship in Kentucky and Tennessee, a related movement was in process of formation in another section of the frontier. In the sparsely settled district of western Pennsylvania, Thomas Campbell, moved by the fact that because of their church affiliations many were being deprived of the comfort of participating in the Lord's Supper, took the bold step of inviting to this Sacrament all such as felt spiritually drawn thereto without any regard whatever to their church connections. True to an ancestry of vigorous ecclesiastical independence of thought, and goaded by the citation of his Presbytery, his views soon crystallized in the Propositions upon the basis of which the Disciples for more than a century have conducted a highly popular and successful propaganda in behalf of non-sectarianism.

Campbell's views on Union are expressed clearly in the following:—

"That the Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to Him in all things according to the Scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and their

[8] Moore, "A Comprehensive History of the Disciples of Christ," pp. 243-246, cited in the author's "Sourcebook," p. 344.

conduct, and of none else; as none else can be truly and properly called Christians.

"That although the Church of Christ upon earth must necessarily exist in particular and distinct societies, locally separate one from another, yet there ought to be no schisms, no uncharitable divisions among them.

"That in order to this, nothing ought to be inculcated upon Christians as Articles of Faith; nor required of them as terms of communion, but what is expressly taught and enjoined upon them in the Word of God. Nor ought anything to be admitted as of Divine obligation, in their Church constitution and managements, but what is expressly enjoined by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles upon the New Testament Church; either in express terms or by approved precedent.

"That division among the Christians is a horrid evil, fraught with many evils. It is anti-Christian, as it destroys the visible unity of the body of Christ. . . . It is anti-Scriptural, as being strictly prohibited by his sovereign authority. . . . It is anti-natural, as it excites Christians to condemn, to hate, and oppose each other, who are bound by the highest and most endearing obligations to love each other as brethren, even as Christ has loved them.

"That although doctrinal exhibitions of the great system of Divine truths, and defensive testimonies in opposition to the prevailing errors be highly expedient, and the more full and explicit they be for those purposes, the better; yet, as these must be in a great measure the effect of human reasoning, and of course must contain many inferential truths, they ought not to be made terms of Christian communion." [9]

While the exigencies of life in the new settlements were thus impelling frontier society toward the unsectarian

[9] Moore, "A Comprehensive History of the Disciples of Christ," pp. 115-118, cited in the author's "Sourcebook," pp. 345-347.

worship and evangelistic effort of the schoolhouse and camp grounds, a sense of moral and spiritual responsibility toward those who had moved into the interior beyond church and Sunday school facilities, was moving citizens "back home" to provide the West with the facilities of worship and moral instruction. As in Britain,[10] the church people of New England and the middle colonies proceeded to organize Societies for the promotion of missionary interest and effort in behalf of the border communities. These Societies rapidly multiplied, anticipating in the lapse of a few years almost the entire diversification of missionary organization today.[11] At the start, several of these Societies distinctly disclaimed any sectarian objective. Membership was solicited from all denominations without any discrimination.[12] Indeed the real motive in organizing new Societies for this frontier missionary task, rather than in committing it to the already existing individual churches and religious bodies was to create a non-sectarian auspice under which all benevolently disposed could coöperate. The urgency of the situation suggested a non-denominational solution. In its *Address* the Massachusetts Missionary Society, among others of which it is representative, was careful to place on record its disinclination "to weaken the evangelical influence of any society of a similar complexion already existing and to renounce all party auspice." [13]

The Female Societies made much of the sentiment of

[10] *Supra*, p. 24.

[11] In a partial list of these societies, there may be mentioned Cent Societies, Female Missionary Societies, Young People's Societies, Youth's Missionary Societies, United Societies of Young Men, Children's Cent Societies.

[12] An *Address* of the New York Missionary Society states that "Large Societies founded on evangelical principles and embracing various denominations have already been formed and are rapidly forming for the purpose of propagating the Gospel among the unhappy heathen. With the magnanimity worthy of Christians they have sacrificed the bigotries of party on the altar of Apostolic zeal."

[13] See *The Connecticut Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. I, No. 9, pp. 353-55.

Christian union. Patterned after the Scottish Concert of Prayer which Jonathan Edwards recommended to the American churches as not "restricted to any particular denomination or party," these organizations of women sought to overcome the sense of weakness and insignificancy due to their geographical separateness in the several towns and villages of New England, by setting apart the first Monday afternoon of every month for solemn prayer to God "particularly that He would send forth laborers into the harvest." Timid and sensitive, as they emerged from their "retired station in life" into public Christian service, these women were gratified to discover that they had "the approbation of good men of different denominations." [14]

The American Tract Society, brought into existence to supply the new settlements with wholesome reading, early adopted the policy that in its literature "there should be nothing of the shibboleth of the sect; nothing to recommend one denomination, or to throw odium on another; nothing of the acrimony of contending parties against those that differ from them." [15]

The American Bible Society that originated through the observations made by Samuel J. Mills upon the spiritual destitution of the Ohio and Mississippi Valley "to furnish great districts of the American continent with well stereotyped plates (of the Bible) for its cheap and extensive diffusion throughout regions which were scantily supplied at a discouraging expense," left no ambiguity in respect of its non-sectarian purpose.—"Local feelings, party prejudices, sectarian jealousies are excluded by its very nature. Its members are leagued in that, and in that alone which calls up every hallowed, and puts down every unhallowed principle—the dissemination

[14] An illuminating *Address* of the Boston Female Society may be found in the author's "Sourcebook," pp. 379-380.

[15] Proceedings of the First Ten Years of the American Tract Society," pp. 11-21, cited in the author's "Sourcebook," pp. 384-385.

of the Scriptures in the received versions where they exist and in the most faithful where they may be required. In such a work, whatever is dignified, kind, venerable, true, has ample scope; while sectarian littleness and rivalries can find no avenue of admission." Its appeal as a national rather than local or denominational organization to furnish a widely extended area with Bibles was that "concentrated action is powerful action. . . . A national object unites national feeling and concurrence. Unity of a great system combines energy of effect with economy of means." [16]

The American Sunday School Union, after Sunday schools had sent their missionaries far into the backwoods settlement and established themselves as an adjunct of the Bible Society, designed to plant a Sunday school wherever there was a population, like the Tract and the Bible Societies, was also projected and launched with the ideal of denominational coöperation. As Christian laymen, the managers of this Union expressed the conviction that they could teach "the essential truths of our common faith without reasonable offense to anyone touching matters of unessential importance. We can maintain the integrity of our relations to our respective churches and communicants while we can unite to teach the truth that Christ taught and as plainly as He taught it." Their experience in the Union had "satisfactorily demonstrated that the great leading principle on which the National Association of the Friends of the Sabbath School was originally based—a Union of the great and cardinal points of Christian belief—is as practical in operation as it is noble in principle." [17]

At the very threshold of the century (1801) when the Missionary Societies were coming into existence, the Con-

[16] See *Address* "To the People of the United States" the "Panoplist." Vol. VII, p. 269 f, author's "Sourcebook," p. 385.

[17] E. W. Rice, "The Sunday School Movement—1780-1917," and "The American Sunday School Union, 1817-1917," pp. 80-81.

gregationalists and Presbyterians perfected one of the most significant instruments for coping with the problem of christianizing the Western Reserve, then in process of rapid settlement. This instrument, known as the Plan of Union, was formed "with a view to prevent alienation and promote union and harmony in those new settlements composed of inhabitants from those bodies." It enjoined upon all its missionaries in the new settlements "to endeavor by all proper means, to promote mutual forbearance and accommodation between those inhabitants of the new settlements." Provision was made that a Congregational church might enjoy the ministry of a Presbyterian, while a Presbyterian church, similarly, might settle a Congregational minister. A scheme was worked out to solve difficulties that might arise affecting either the minister or the congregation. A further provision was made for the uniting under one minister of a congregation composed partly of Presbyterians and partly of Congregationalists.[18] This arrangement, of course, carried with it the right of a Congregationalist to a seat in the Synod and General Assembly, a concession that was later challenged by Old-School exponents of Presbyterianism as entirely subversive of the distinctive genius of Presbyterial government. The fact, however, that the protest found no formal expression for more than thirty years, and even then led to a schism which cleft the Presbyterian denomination into almost equal proportions, is an indication of how considerably the exigencies of the New West had congregationalized Presbyterianism.

A manifest effect of the Plan of Union was the organization, a quarter of a century later, of the American Home Missionary Society in which Presbyterians, Congregationalists and others so disposed, joined heart and hand in establishing missions in churchless districts of the West, without paying heed to what church affiliation these mis-

[18] The document setting forth this Plan of Union may be consulted in the author's "Sourcebook," p. 422.

sions should eventually establish. And for more than ten years the pressure of frontier evangelization was sufficiently strong to maintain this non-sectarian arrangement. It then was repudiated by the Old-School party as a too highly congregationalized type of Presbyterianism.

That Presbyterians and Congregationalists were able thus to ignore for the time their denominational rivalry in order more effectively to press the christianization of the new settlements, is only one aspect of the non-denominational impulse that was sweeping through the churches, as they confronted the strategic opportunity of leavening the Middle West with Christian ideals. A minister of the Dutch Reformed Church gave (1829) typical expression to this sentiment,—"How often and how emphatically did our Saviour pray that his disciples might be united, and propose this as the result, 'that the world might believe that Thou hast sent me.' The conversion of the world, then, depends on the union of Christians. As soon as the church shall flow together, the nations will flow unto her. . . . The friends of division, sometimes compare the separate movements of different denominations to those of the twelve tribes, marching in orderly procession through the wilderness. They might rather have compared them to the journey of brethren, who are continually falling out by the way; or to the movements of allied armies, which are foolishly annoying and weakening each other by mutual jealousies and broils, instead of uniting their whole strength against the common enemy. . . . When then we consider that the character of this immense valley a century hence will depend upon the direction and impulse given it now, in its forming state, must not every Christian feel disposed to forego every party consideration and cordially unite with his fellow Christians, to furnish them those means of intellectual and moral cultivation of which they stand in need. . . . In this age of the world, especially in our free country,

every denomination whose main energy consists in her sectarian spirit, must ultimately dwindle." [19]

It was during this eventful period that a project for church union was launched. At a meeting of the General Synod of the Lutheran Church of the United States, convened in Philadelphia (1838), a Committee representing several Protestant bodies was asked to formulate some practical proposals looking toward the healing of the schism of divided Protestantism. Certain fundamental principles were readily agreed upon by this Committee—that a plan of coöperation should require no one to renounce any doctrine believed by him to be true, or to accept one he regarded as erroneous; that each denomination should retain its own organization, discipline, and worship with liberty to alter it at option; that it should not dissuade any from discussing fundamentals and non-fundamentals, if done in the spirit of Christian love; that it should be applicable to all "evangelical fundamentally orthodox churches," based on the existing common ground of doctrine and intended to erect a superstructure "of kindly feeling and harmonious intercourse and fraternal cooperation." On the basis of these fundamental principles, proposals were made to the effect that any denomination wishing to coöperate in the proposed union could do so through a vote of its highest judiciary assenting to certain doctrinal statements selected from the outstanding Protestant Confessions; that the several orthodox churches should send delegates as advisory members to the meetings of the highest judicatory of each participating body; that coöperation in voluntary associations, local and general, in Bible, Tract and Missionary Societies, should be encouraged; that the Bible as far as practicable be made the text book in Sunday schools and in congregational and theological instruction; that general anniversary celebra-

[19] Taken from an *Address* of Rev. J. Van Vechten, quoted in part in the author's "Sourcebook," p. 426.

tions should be maintained, as also a free sacramental communion for such as chose to participate.[20]

It will thus be seen that almost a century ago, under the compelling force of giving the Gospel to the rapidly rising civilization of the West, with the insight and kindly feelings begotten of a twenty-year experience in applying Christian coöperation in the Plan of Union and various missionary societies, evangelical leaders were able to formulate a scheme of church coöperation anticipating in essentials the federative plan of our own time.

But the project to which these farsighted church statesmen applied themselves so resolutely was not to be immediately realized. A long interval of controversy, recrimination, ruptured fellowship, and embittered memory was to intervene. At the very time when the religious needs of the West were calling loudest for a united Protestant missionary offensive, another issue was thrust into the foreground of the nation's thinking. The churches suddenly found themselves in the maelstrom of the slavery controversy, and forced, however reluctantly, to an alignment with or against the traffic in negroes. In the angry passions of that hour, even the bonds of denominational heritage and missionary responsibility proved unavailing. Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians of the South severed fellowship with their co-denominationalists of the North. The allegiance of border churches, the contested rights to church property, and the appropriation of pulpits during the course of the war proved later to be factors in widening breaches that the most deft handling of negotiation has failed to bridge. The fact that union or federation has been consummated among several bodies in the North, while denominations North and South of like faith have remained divided, indicates what a serious setback was given to the cause of Christian union at the auspicious moment when the urgency of

[20] *The overture for Christian union* in its documentary form may be consulted in the author's "Sourcebook," pp. 427-428.

christianizing the Middle West was giving an interdenominational catholic color to the thought of religious leaders.

But slavery and its related questions are not sufficient to account for the present divided condition of American Protestantism. Whereas the divisive influence of slavery among the churches was latitudinal, it is the longitudinal divisions of creeds and sects that is even more pronounced in the Protestantism of America.

For an adequate explanation of the rank outgrowth of denominational rivalry it is necessary again to consider conditions as they prevailed in the new settlements.

The message that the pioneer preachers, however evangelical, carried into the new regions, had a pronounced theological bias. From the outset, Methodism in America was aggressively Arminian. Even Francis Asbury, while disinclined to engage in controversy, and kindly and charitable in his estimate of people, was unable to refrain from ungenerous criticisms of the Baptists because of their Calvinistic views of Grace and the atonement.[21] And it was the Methodists of Carolina and Virginia, people of humble means, eager to avail themselves of the free land opportunities of the interior, who, followed up in their remotest settlements by their circuit riders, joyfully welcomed and zealously proclaimed the Arminian teachings of their preachers. But Virginia also supplied large companies of Baptist frontiersmen who, still feeling the quickening of a revival that had visited the most of them shortly before they began their westward movement, were ardently devoted to the propagation of a Calvinistic Gospel. Presbyterians, not so emotionally stimulated by revivals, but as thoroughly established in Calvinism, were also taking up their homes in the interior. The back districts, therefore, early were visited with controversy

[21] For instance, see his Diary, Vol. I, pp. 32, 124, 129, 130, 242, 292, 302. Even the Presbyterians received similar criticisms because of their Calvinism—see his "Journal," Vol. III, p. 141.

and polemical preaching. Especially such districts as were established in their Calvinism were vigorously assaulted by the Methodists.[22] Listening to sermons highly colored by doctrinal bias, it was inevitable that neighbors, gathered in log cabin or schoolhouse for a message of spiritual uplift, or even for diversion from the mental monotony of their isolated week-day life, should find themselves almost unconsciously converted into violent protagonists of some brand of theology. Districts that left to themselves might have evolved a type of community worship were rent into sectarian camps through their dependence upon the preaching of itinerants who brought into the community an evangelical but polemical message. Nor, indeed, was the camp meeting able entirely to escape this unwholesome injection of theological animus. When a Baptist or Presbyterian seized the opportunity of the camp ground for a Calvinistic exposition of Scripture, the chance was that a Methodist preacher immediately ascending the pulpit would proceed to call upon his errant ministerial brother "to preach a free and full salvation by grace through faith." [23]

Settlement proceeded so rapidly in many sections of the frontier that it was inevitable that communities should be "pocketed" and shut off almost entirely from a knowledge of current events and the public mind of the nation. For them, indeed, it is too much to claim that they had anything approaching what may be termed a public opinion. Public opinion had not yet evolved. These communities knew what was happening within their limited boundaries, but little of what happened beyond. Few newspapers reached them; the post was infrequent; travellers were almost unknown. It was this that made frontier settlements receptive to theological controversy. And

[22] An illuminating instance of controversy between Methodists and Presbyterians may be found in Firth, "Experience and Gospel Labors of Rev. Benjamin Abbott," pp. 161-162.

[23] For a good case, see Shipp, "Methodism in South Carolina," pp. 330-331.

in no less measure did it contribute to sectarianism. However indifferent a new community was in the matter of what particular religious body brought to it the means of Grace, it was likely to raise up a number of narrow-minded denominationalists who identified the Kingdom of God with the sect that was ministering in their immediate vicinity.

In isolated frontier districts the unsectarian mind would have been a monstrosity. The hysteria of the camp-meeting ground and the sectarianism represented by rival meeting-houses at the crossroads, were both products of the type of mind induced by the aloofness, strain, and narrowed interest of the life of the new settlement.[24]

Some communities, moreover, were not sectarianized by the incoming of Methodists or Baptists with their welcomed message of Calvinism or Arminianism. From the outset, these communities had been religious enterprises conceived of the concern to protect cherished church ideals and customs from being absorbed in the older civilization of the East.[25] And it was not to be expected that sectaries who had traveled hundreds of miles to get away from the pressing contacts of worldly neighbors would become exponents of church coöperation or union, specially in view of the fact that least among frontier settlements did they suffer from lack of ministers.

Left to itself to work out the problem of church ministration, the frontier probably would have made a slow but perceptible movement toward the elimination of church overlapping. But it early became an area for the sectarian exploitation of the older churches of the East. Denominations, weak as well as strong, felt called of God to put forth herculean efforts to gain a foothold in or to capture the civilization of the West;—the weak in order to lift themselves from their historical obscurity, the strong to retain their inherited prestige. Legion were the excuses why communities, just emerging from the precarious

[24] *Supra*, p. 54. [25] *Supra*, p. 85.

struggle to establish their homes, each had a visitation of churches bidding for support. To give a few families the distinctive brand of denominationalism upon which they had been reared "back home," to preserve the New Testament Church by rigid insistence upon believer's baptism through immersion, and to maintain the Gospel of Free Grace—these were only a few of the pretexts under which aggressive sectarianism feverishly strained to "get in on the ground."

This unseemly rivalry extended far beyond the setting up of churches. It became an unwholesome factor in the selection of school teachers, and reached a disgraceful climax in saddling upon a small community the financing of a college, ostensibly for the function of providing Christian education, but really to supply facilities for proselytizing, and to use the prestige of education as an advertisement in denominational propaganda.

From the foregoing, it will be seen that the frontier, during the course of its history, has been operating in the diametrically opposed directions of denominational cooperation and rivalry. At certain periods, in both the East and the West, the impulse toward coöperation has seemed the stronger; at other periods, the sentiment of rivalry appears to have dominated. The reader will likely be anxious to know in which sphere its influence proved to be the stronger. Has the frontier been a unifying power in American church life, with incidental tendencies toward sectarianism, or has it been an essentially divisive factor, retarded only by sentimental leanings toward union? Probably it is too soon to attempt an answer to this inquiry. Much may be said for either plea, and more will be forthcoming when local history has added to our knowledge of frontier church life. This only seems thoroughly established—that the movement toward church union or the opposing tendency toward sectarianism has not been peculiar to either the East or the West. Church union has not been the sentiment nurtured among the older churches

of the East and transplanted to frontier territory. Nor, on the other hand, has the sentiment of union risen spontaneously in the West and been carried to the older areas of the East. The same statement may be made concerning sectarianism.

Coöperative and sectarian sentiment has seemed to move in cycles. In the closing decade of the eighteenth century, rivalry was uppermost. Then followed forty years in which coöperation prevailed. A decade, approximately, of discord and division gave place, on the eve of the Civil War, to vigorous criticism of the multiplication of small competing churches,[26] a sentiment that eclipsed during the sixties and seventies, was revived about forty years ago, and has produced the Federative movement among the evangelical churches.

[26] See editorial, Weakness of Churches; Its Causes and Effects, in *The Home Missionary*, February, 1856.

CHAPTER VII

CENTRALIZED CONTROL IN CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Early American Methodism presents a seemingly strange blending of democracy and aristocracy. In its spirit and method of government it belongs at once to the new-world and to the old-world order. Thoroughly American both in its refusal to be controlled by the instructions of its venerable transatlantic founder, and in its insistence upon working out in its own way the moral and social problems of colonies emerging from a successful assertion of independence, Methodism, nevertheless, in respect of polity chose a course conspicuously out of accord with the democratic stirrings of the times.

By "a very uncommon train of Providences" connected with the course of the Revolution, it will be recalled that Wesley, after considerable exercise of mind, felt constrained to provide for his American followers an ecclesiastical oversight entirely independent of the existing Episcopal church which at the moment was thoroughly discredited by the turn of political events. It was planned that Dr. Coke, ordained at Wesley's hands, was to proceed to America and there ordain Francis Asbury as his associate superintendent. But the situation was decidedly delicate. It might easily develop that Asbury, who alone of the British travelling preachers had chivalrously remained at his post during the trying Revolutionary days, and who more than any other had saved the American Conferences from drifting apart into serious sectional differences, should resent as obtrusive the joint super-

intendency of a stranger qualified therefor only because of intimate fellowship with Wesley and mature legal experience. The fact that Asbury, high in the esteem of the American itinerants, had been exercising for years presidential powers over the Conferences did not lend additional assurance to the acceptability of Wesley's plan. Wesley seems to have abstained from any direct oral or written communication with Asbury, preferring to entrust the whole matter to Coke to be worked out in the mollifying atmosphere of personal contacts. Arriving in New York, Coke discreetly refrained from any announcement of Wesley's plan, awaiting first an opportunity of conferring with Asbury. A few days later, after public worship in Barrett's Chapel, where as strangers they met for the first time, the "future arrangement of Methodist affairs" in America was talked over. Asbury professes to have been "shocked" by Coke's announcement. But a matter involving the future of Methodism was not to be decided by his personal feelings. Neither was it to be settled by private arrangement between him and a deputy of Wesley. The latter intended that his superintendents, Coke and Asbury, were to be under himself, the sole ecclesiastical rulers of the preachers and people in American Methodism. Using Conference only for counsel, as did Wesley in Britain, they were to make and enforce their own regulations according to their own judgments. Thus Wesley in a "conjoint episcopal and patriarchal capacity" was to retain the headship of the whole Methodist church in Europe and America. The Methodist church in America was to be of ultra-episcopal type, governed by bishops without the semblance of a legislature.

Of course, it was all highly flattering to Asbury who not so very long before, because of Rankin's criticisms, had come perilously near the humiliation of a recall to England by his master. But, however flattering, Asbury could not become party to an ecclesiastical scheme imposed upon the American preachers without their con-

currence. A few of them were at hand, having been summoned by Asbury for counsel, when he had an inkling that Coke was the bearer of important communications from Wesley. To these, therefore, Asbury referred Coke's plan for the future management of Methodist affairs. Difference of opinion may have developed in this council. Hence probably the decision to immediately call a Conference, Asbury insisting upon unanimity as a condition of any changed relations between him and the preachers. Garrettson accordingly was sent out "like an arrow from north to south" to assemble the whole itinerating body in Baltimore on the ensuing Christmas Eve. Thus were laid the foundations of the Governing Conference of American Methodism. With public sentiment strongly anti-British and clamorous for self-government, Asbury wisely reasoned that in order to enjoy favor with the people, the Methodist church in America must become a thoroughly national institution severed from all foreign domination, and administered in the spirit of popular control.

The Christmas Conference proved to be a democratic gathering. The attendance was large, comprising a majority of the preachers. Their attitude of mind was scarcely that of the conventional cleric. Not one of them was a deacon or elder. There was no official steering or limitation of debate. Determinations were made by a majority vote. Heartiness and unanimity seem to have prevailed, since only in such an atmosphere could a Constitution have been elaborated and a Discipline revised during the brief space of less than ten days. Asbury received the unanimous endorsation of his fellow-itinerants and was forthwith ordained to the superintendency. The independent sovereignty of Conference was clearly affirmed in the constitutional provision whereby no person was to be ordained a superintendent, elder or deacon, without the consent of the majority of the Conference. Moreover, the superintendent was made amenable for his conduct to the Conference which was given power to expel

him for improper conduct and to suspend his ministerial functions if he ceased without permission to travel at large among the people.

In a moment of sentimental enthusiasm, at the suggestion of Coke but not with Asbury's approval, the powers of Conference were temporarily suspended by a resolution of the preachers that "during the life of the Rev. Mr. Wesley we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the Gospel, ready in matters belonging to the Church government to obey his commands." Two years later Wesley, availing himself of this pledge of submission, disregarding the already fixed time and place of Conference, issued instructions to Coke to summon a General Conference for the appointment of Richard Whatcoat as an associate-superintendent to Asbury. But the preachers who, in intervening Conferences, had been directing the affairs of their church, were in no mood to submit to Wesley's dictation. They not only criticized the selection of Whatcoat as unqualified for the superintendency, but, disavowing responsibility for an engagement of submission in which many of them as absent from the Christmas Conference had not participated, they proceeded to its rescission and omission from the next printed edition of the Minutes. Wesley's recommendations respecting the appointment of Whatcoat and Garrettson failed of results; his name was removed from the list of American superintendents, and Thomas Coke was able to retain his upon the records only by virtue of his written engagement not to exercise the functions of a superintendent when outside of the country.

The Christmas Conference made no provision for a successor or an ensuing session, but dissolved when it adjourned. Giving effect to its Constitution, and the shaping of policies for the churches devolved upon the several Conferences meeting in different places from year to year. Uniformity and unanimity of action were possible only through submitting issues to all the Conferences.

This procedure, obviously, proved clumsy and burdensome for the bishops. So much so, indeed, that Asbury, most of the time left by Dr. Coke to administer alone the episcopal office, conceived of a plan of a Council of advisers. His purpose in no sense betrays aristocratic leanings. Just as democratic as years before, he was only seeking counsellors "as so many witnesses to his probity and transactions and as security that he may not run headlong to make the community insolvent." Unfortunately, the Constitution of the Council called for unanimity for all binding resolutions. This really entrusted to Asbury the powers of an absolute veto. Its membership, moreover, was composed of presiding elders who were the appointees of the bishops. The result was that the preachers, especially the younger element, sensitive to the seeming pretensions of the Council, as a few years before they had been to the dictations of Wesley, revolted against the Council and "turned it out of doors." A single session terminated the career of an institution, almost universally feared as likely to be the medium for imposing upon the Methodist ministerial brotherhood the will of autocratically disposed bishops.

A substitute was soon evolved. The General Conference, convened quadrennially, open to all the preachers, with ample opportunity for discussion, became the organ through which the will of the majority might be promptly registered in well-matured policies. For sixteen years the Quadrennial Conference guided Methodism with scarcely a limitation upon its prerogatives. The making of a new or the abolishing of an old rule of Discipline required a two-thirds vote of the membership of the Conference. Amending a rule was effected by a simple majority vote. It was some years before the full realization of the almost unlimited powers of the Conference dawned upon the framers of its Constitution. Not until 1808, when the delegated feature had become a necessity, were restrictive safeguards thrown around such vital issues as the Articles

of Religion, the episcopacy, the itinerancy of the superintendents, the General Rules of the Societies, the minister's right of trial and appeal, with his vested interest in the Book Concern. Throughout this period and for twenty additional years, the bishops were under almost constant criticism from a section of the ministers because of their power to elect the presiding elders. Again and again were efforts made to bring the selection of these important administrative functionaries under direct Conference control. It was not until the defiant refusal of Bishops McKendree and Soule to administer a modified plan of electing the elders, and the obtrusion into the foreground of the highly ominous issue of lay-representation, that this eldership matter was pushed off the stage of agitation. In constant fear of episcopal domination, Conference continued to insist upon residence in America as a condition of Coke's continued exercise of episcopal functions, and to load upon the shoulders of aged Asbury almost the entire burden of episcopal itinerancy and administration.

It thus appears that for approximately half a century one of the chief concerns of American Methodism was to protect Conference from the slightest domination of bishops abroad or in America. Within Methodism the newly awakened spirit of national independence kept expressing itself in a jealous insistence upon the rights of the preachers assembled in Conference to completely control the personnel and functionings of the bishops.

Yet in its relation to the lay-membership of the churches, Conference all the while played an exclusive rôle of aristocracy. Laymen had contributed greatly toward the progress of early Methodism in the colonies. In their several ways—through social prestige, hospitality, protection, construction of chapels—Judge White, Richard Barrett, Henry Gough and Judge Bassett, not to mention others less distinguished, had each done much to make Methodism worthy of the churchly independence

conferred upon it through Coke's ordination and mission. Yet none of these staunch supporters was honored with a summons to the deliberations of the Christmas Conference. That the steps taken at this Conference were cordially endorsed by the rank and file of the Methodist members makes no less strange the fact that their views were sounded out in advance at most only informally and at random. Indeed, the exclusively ministerial character of the Baltimore deliberations probably accounts for the rather apologetic manner in which Lee, Asbury, William Watters and Ezekiel Cooper each takes pains to record the fact that what was done by the preachers was approved by all the members and societies.[1]

The Constitution formulated by the preachers at the Christmas Conference made no provision for lay participation. There is no indication that the propriety of any such participation was discussed or so much as mooted. The Constitutional revisions of 1792, 1796 and 1808 do not appear to have raised the issue of laymen's rights. Several years had to elapse before the agitation for the election by Conference of the presiding elders encouraged a few more radically disposed reformers to memorialize the General Conference of 1824 on the matter of lay representation. The reply to this Memorial, as haughty as it was complacent and unyielding, fully prepares the reader to forecast the summary measures by which Conference proceeded to repress the agitators and to drive out of its fellowship such as would not be silenced. Arbitrary measures were taken to uproot the principle of lay representation, because proponents of an aristocratic system of church government found themselves confronted with what seemed a radical subversion of their cherished church order. And a few reformers were willing to adventure upon the organization of an entirely new church because they realized the hopelessness of attempting to

[1] See Bangs, "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," Vol. I, p. 65.

effect within organic Methodism an immediate transition from aristocratic to democratic ideals of government.

It is regrettable, of course, that, so far as the Methodists were concerned, the democratic ideal of government was compelled to find its refuge in a separate organization. Bishops and Conferences found themselves committed all the more to the exclusive methods of control for which they had so energetically contended. Controversial pride made it difficult for many years for parties to recede from positions tenaciously upheld as indispensable to the furtherance of their church. As late as 1855 the editor of the *Southwestern Baptist* published a series of articles endeavoring to prove "that the Episcopacy of Methodists is anti-democratic and anti-republican; that in so far as its operation is unrestricted by modifying agencies, it is essentially and necessarily in direct antagonism to the genius of our free institutions; and that its origin and history, up to this time, had developed a series of facts and principles totally irreconcilable with American Democracy." In defense, Rev. E. J. Hamill, a Methodist clergyman, maintained "that the analogy between the Methodist Episcopal Church government and the government of the United States, in those points in which the great Head of the Church has allowed scope for human legislation, was striking." Baptists and Methodists both seemed satisfied with their laurels of victory. Somewhat chivalrously they jointly financed the publication in a single volume of the arguments advanced by their respective protagonists.

Then came the sudden abandonment of the "anti-democratic, anti-republican, un-American" system of Methodist Government. By a remarkably swift change of sentiment, appearing almost immediately among the Southern Methodists, democracy prevailed through provision, first in the South and later in the North, for lay representation.

Whence the cause of this abandonment of a position

regarded not long before as strategic to the propagation of Methodism? Probably one factor was the famous "Property Case" argued before the Courts with commendable restraint and sensitive regard for differing opinion, illuminating with fine historical insight the genius and development of Methodism, and making no concealment of its aristocratic character. Reverdy Johnson, Counsel for Plaintiffs, made this frank statement before the Court:

"This Church, be it remembered, even unto the present time, and I speak of it in no offensive sense, as regards its government, has been absolutely, since the days of Wesley, an aristocracy. Laymen have had, and now have no voice in it. If there is a layman within the sound of my voice, he knows he has no voice now. Heretofore they have been satisfied with the government. They have acted upon the saying of Pope,—'For forms of government, let fools contest, That which is best administered, is best.' They perhaps will be found changing their opinion, when they find it is not always best administered." [2]

The fact that J. R. Graves followed up an attack by Samuel Henderson with a broadside against the un-American character of Methodism, entitled "Republicanism Backwards," may have helped to bring home to Methodists that their method of government was a drag upon the wheels of their progress. That this publication had reached its thirtieth edition in the course of four years may have added to its ominousness.

But the real cause of the sudden collapse of aristocratic control was not in the enlightenment of the Methodist laymen nor in the prevailing prejudices against Methodism as an un-American institution. It was rather in the fact that twenty-five years of history in the Methodist Protestant church had borne ample testimony that Conference

[2] "The Methodist Church Property Case," p. 331.

rights could be conferred upon laymen without impairing in the least degree the principle of itinerancy which was recognized by all as essential to successful evangelism in frontier society.

This point may be made clearer by raising the question as to how it had come about that American Methodism, working out for itself a Constitution at a time when democratic currents were so strong, exhibited a preference for aristocratic control. Why did it retain features that subjected it to the criticism of being fundamentally un-American? The precedents of British Methodism are entirely inadequate by way of explanation. The members of the Christmas and subsequent Constitutional Conferences were no mere imitators. They conceived of their task as being vastly more than that of establishing in America a replica of British Methodism. At several points they struck out along original lines. The paramount interest with them was to assure to the churches the advantages of the itinerating system. To be sure, at this point they were not deviating from the course of their British founder. Wesley, from the outset, had appreciated the value of itinerancy to British Methodism. And probably, next to his service in averting a rupture between the Conferences on the issue of the Sacraments, Asbury's greatest contribution to American Methodism was that, following in the footsteps of Wesley, he kept insisting that the preachers should continue their itinerant movements. Throughout his long career, Asbury's enthusiasm for the itinerancy never seems to have relaxed. In his first years in America, he regarded it as a means of keeping certain types of ministers from monopolizing the advantages of city pulpits where they "live like gentlemen."[3] Later, he connected the itinerancy with the flexibility of Methodism

[3] There were some debates amongst the preachers in the Conferences, relative to the conduct of some who had manifested a desire to abide in the cities, and live like gentlemen. "The Journal of Rev. Francis Asbury," Vol. I, p. 56.

in adjusting itself to needed reforms.[4] That some of the preachers were much disinclined to be transferred from the congenial centres to the isolated countryside in no wise deflected him from the unpleasant duty of keeping them all in circuit. His Journal is constantly deploring the fact that far too many of the ministers were choosing wives and settling as local preachers rather than keeping on the rounds of itinerant duty. It was this itinerant passion of Asbury's that probably explains the early realization on the part of the preachers of the importance of itinerancy as a method of evangelism. The members of the Christmas Conference attached explicit itinerating conditions to the discharge of the episcopal office. A few years later, when the issue of the choosing of presiding elders arose, all that saved the bishops from defeat at the hands of O'Kelly and his party was the prevailing sentiment among the preachers that the efficiency of itinerancy might be impaired by the proposed Conference control of elders. Far better, they reasoned, illogically to limit the powers of Conference in the matter of controlling the elders, than to jeopardize the itinerancy through any possible lack of cooperation between bishop and presiding elder. Thirty years afterward, when lay representation was under debate no objection was more formidable than that this proposal seemed to threaten the principle of itinerancy. Nothing, indeed, in the early history of American Methodism stands out more clearly than the fact that the strategic necessity of protecting itinerancy from any possible infringement was an axiomatic principle with practically all its preachers. Methodism had two fundamentals, and only two,—to preach the Gospel, and to keep its ministers in circuit.

[4] I have thought, if we do wrong we rank among the vilest of the vile, as having been more favored than any others. Many other churches go upon the paths already trodden two or three hundred years. We formed our own church, and claim the power of a reform every four years. We can make more extensive observations because our preachers in six or seven years can go through the whole continent, and see the state of other churches in all parts of this new world. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 311.

That such was the case is entirely natural. If itinerancy was suited to Britain, it was surely much more so to America. No other system so effectively could spread the services of a comparatively few preachers over as large an area of frontier settlement. No other was so well adapted to the exigencies of small churches unable independently to finance ministers of their own. No other more equitably could distribute the responsibilities and privations, connected with the evangelization of a continent. It would have been little less than a marvel if, after seeing the singular adaptability of the circuit system to meet the religious needs of new communities, the preachers had failed to recognize in it the keystone of effective frontier evangelism.

Determined that at any sacrifice itinerancy should be safeguarded, it was easy for the circuit riders to convince themselves that they should be the sole custodians of the government of their church. If laymen were assigned a place in the counsels of the Governing Conference it would necessarily be as representatives of local areas, which thus represented were likely to receive an undue share of Conference consideration. Laymen of wealth and social standing were likely to work their way into commanding places of influence from which they would dominate the Conference and the bishops, securing for their local churches the services of the most desired preachers. Methodism had gloried in the impartiality with which all parts had been administered in the interest of the whole. It had known of no sectionalism, of no favored churches or ministers. This splendid tradition seemed to be jeopardized by the suggested innovation of lay representation which, on that account, received the support of only a small following of the ministers.

It seemed necessary, also, to deal with the local preachers in the same fashion as with the laymen. If the circuit rider, renouncing the itinerancy and settling with a church, was to continue in Conference standing, enjoying

privileges of administrative control and the guarantee of quarterage, it would soon be felt that itinerancy was a superfluous and unrequited heroism. However imperative on grounds of health or domestic responsibilities it might be for some itinerant preachers to locate, others with less justification would claim similar immunity from traveling. Thus the heroic age of Methodism in which domestic comforts, professional congeniality, and the sectional interests of communities had all been sacrificed for the glory of a triumphant evangelism, would soon be entirely of the past.

How early the preachers, as a body, fully realized the significance of the circuit system for a church operating in frontier areas is difficult, if not indeed impossible, to determine. So is it with fixing upon a date as marking the first realization of the necessity of keeping Conference entirely in the control of the preachers as a protection to the itinerancy. What may be set down as certain is that some time before the issue of lay representatives had become acute, all parties within Methodism were united on the necessity of doing nothing which would in any way endanger the circuit system.[5] A small minority were of the opinion that the itinerancy would not be jeopardized in the slightest degree by giving Conference privileges to laymen. The majority were as firmly convinced that lay rights would prove disastrous to the circuit system.

A quarter of a century demonstrated that the forecast of the minority was correct. Itinerancy had proved to be absolutely safe in the keeping of the Methodist Protestants who had conferred Conference rights upon their laymen. There was no valid reason, therefore, why the Methodists, taunted by the Baptists for their "anti-Democracy and anti-Republicanism," should not beat a retreat on their

[5] This is abundantly shown by "The Report of Petitions and Memorials to the Conference of 1828," framed by Bishop Emory. See "The Life of the Rev. John Emory, D. D., by his Eldest Son," pp. 189-211, for a more complete exposition of Emory's views. It appears also in the *Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review*, January, 1830.

ministerially controlled Conference. If it hurt some of them to be numbered among the false prophets, they at least had the satisfaction of swinging their church fully into line with American ideals.

Another issue forged its way into the foreground of Methodism during the latter half of the century—the time limit. From the brief term of six months adopted by Asbury in the beginning of his circuit administration, the time had been gradually extended to two years.[6] There it remained for more than fifty years. Short and cumbersome as it may seem to the present generation, it was quite long enough for the strenuous days when a large majority of the preachers had to accept the severe simplicity and actual hardships of life in the new settlements. Four or five years of circuit pioneering would have broken the spirit of many an ardent itinerant. But two years could be endured with equanimity. To be sure, the new location might prove to be as trying as the present, yet there was a chance that it might be less exacting.

Fifty years made great changes. Throughout large sections of well-established settlement, the hardships of itinerancy passed away almost entirely. Homes were comfortable; roads were passable; and the circuits were smaller. There was no longer the strain of bygone days necessitating frequent change. Moreover, social conditions had vastly changed. Towns and cities were emerging with problems that could scarcely be understood, much less solved in the brief course of a couple of years. The demand for religious education was fast displacing the urgency of evangelism. Two years were far too short for constructive pastoral ministration. Hence the lengthening to three years, subsequently to five, and at last the removal entirely of the time limit.

Itinerancy is fast disappearing. Admirably adapted to the needs of an undeveloped society, itinerancy is seriously

[6] The reasons leading to this change are set forth in the *Methodist Review*, March, 1888.

defective in ministering to life that has reached an advanced stage of culture and refinement. One readily sees that it is only a matter of time until the highly differentiated needs of thousands of Methodist congregations have entirely detached as many ministers from the operations of the circuit system. Centralized control of ministerial service will have been largely relegated to frontier days to which it rightly belonged.

That the Methodists, although strongly moved to democracy because of their social status and evangelical fervor, accommodated themselves readily to highly centralized administrative control, is no more remarkable than that the Baptists, so individualistic in their church policy, should have developed in the course of their American history much associational fellowship and voluntary oversight. Probably in no religious body in America has there been such an evolution in polity as among the Baptists. Who could have dreamed that the Baptist churches of New England, which for decades and in some instances for almost a century, did not have so much as an Association, were to produce in the course of less than a hundred and fifty years, the Constitution of the Northern Baptist Convention with its secondary representation, its coöperating organizations and its Board of Promotion? Rarely, if ever, has a Christian denomination showed greater flexibility in the matter of administration and more capacity to adapt its principles of government to new and changing situations.

The Association movement, inspired, undoubtedly, by British precedent, originated (1707) in a group of churches in and around Philadelphia, seeking a means of composing differences and of regulating ministerial affairs. More than half a century elapsed before the Warren Association in New England was created as a medium for exposing and remonstrating against the discomforts and glaring injustices of the parish system. But in Virginia and Carolina, several Associations appeared

much earlier. They were meant to promote union among the churches, and to supply counsel in church difficulties. More important, however, was their function in making the best possible provision for preaching in the large number of available stations where people were calling for the Word of God. Long before, and particularly during the Revolution, Episcopalianism had failed lamentably to meet the needs of the parishes, especially in Virginia. Presbyterians and Methodists both were awake to this opportunity of evangelism. So also were the Baptists. In the Kehukee Association, they discussed the propriety of providing for itinerant preachers much after the fashion of Methodism. For ten years the churches of this Association wavered, at times strongly influenced by the sentiment for local church independence which seemed to be imperiled, but as often feeling the urge toward the method of evangelizing that they saw the Methodist circuit rider using so effectively. For a considerable time scruples respecting church independence were dismissed and the plan of the itinerancy was incorporated in the workings of this Association.[7] Provision, indeed, was made (1771) by the Separate Baptists in Virginia for the ordination of itinerant ministers without any application on their part to the Association.[8] And, although thus ordained without Associational direction, they were qualified as well to enter upon a settled pastorate and empowered under certain circumstances to administer the ordinance of baptism.[9]

A greater surprise awaits many of the Baptists of today to learn that the General Association of Virginia Baptists in 1776, by unanimous vote, went the length of establishing an episcopacy, and of electing three ministers

[7] "History of the Kehukee Association," by L. Burkitt and Jesse Read, pp. 123, 128, 223. The History of this Association gives the names of several churches and preachers that were connected with the Baptist itinerant system, pp. 220, 223, 245, 253, 266 and 272.

[8] Semple, "History of the Baptists of Virginia," p. 51.

[9] "History of the Kehukee Association," pp. 69, 128.

to fill the office.[10] Ordination of the ministers was removed from the churches and given to the bishops. The churches were instructed how to proceed against ministerial offenses demanding impeachment. If in the lower court, an indictment was sustained, provision was made for the organization of a high court, to be called a General Conference of the Churches, which should have power to excommunicate or restore the ministers. It is only fair to add, however, that a reaction quickly followed and the bishops disappeared from office. Nor did the itinerant system even in its most flourishing period become general among the Baptists. Viewed with suspicion by such as had deep feelings on the matter of church independence, the itinerancy seems in the course of a quarter of a century to have passed into disuse; but not until it had done much in detaching the Baptist constituency at large from its traditional view upon the strict independence of the local church. However particularistic their church views, the Baptists were compelled to give serious consideration for a time at least to a scheme entailing joint responsibility among the churches of an Association. For the moment, as was natural, they drew back from a violent break with their traditional views on church polity. But their successors were to find it easier to work out in an entirely different way effective plans of association, partly because the need for ministers became increasingly urgent, and partly because an earlier generation in Virginia and Carolina had raised the issue, and for a time applied the plan of an Associational itinerancy of pastors.[11]

These successors proved to be the men and women, who at the opening of the nineteenth century, found themselves confronted with the moral and spiritual destitution on the frontier into which their sons and daughters, brothers and

[10] Howell, "Early Baptists of Virginia," pp. 110. Quoted in Neely, "The Evolution of Episcopacy and Organic Methodism," pp. 169-170.

[11] It is noteworthy that half a century later John M. Peck, pioneer missionary of the Baptists in the state of Illinois, advocated something at least approximating the itinerancy of the Methodists.

sisters, fellow-community citizens and church members had penetrated. Something had to be done without delay and on a scale far too imposing for the individual or single church. Societies proved to be the spontaneous solution of this problem. Sometimes groups of women or young people banded themselves for prayer, the raising of funds, the assisting of needy ministerial students, or indeed, the collecting of clothing for the new settlements of the West. In several instances, churches drew together into a missionary organization for the purpose of evangelizing the frontier. The sense of responsibility was no longer a restricted individual church consciousness. Whatever their views of church polity, Baptists, no less than Congregationalists, and both these bodies quite as effectively as the Presbyterians, adjusted themselves to the necessities of the situation by putting their seal of approval upon societies organized to deal with some phase of pressing frontier christianization. What resulted was that the christianization of the West became an enterprise in which few of the churches felt themselves sufficiently strong to conduct independent operations, but one in which an increasing number was glad to pool such resources as could in any way be of service in the crisis. Eschewing any coercive pressure upon the individual church at a time, indeed, when sentimental interest in the frontier made coercion as unnecessary as it was un-Baptistic, considerable sense of group responsibility developed during the course of the first quarter of the nineteenth century.[12]

[12] The cause of Foreign Missions, thrust upon the Baptists by the peculiar train of circumstances connected with the career of Adoniram Judson, is not, of course, to be ignored as a factor in this development of Baptist group responsibility. From the time that the Triennial Convention was organized, Foreign Missions were able to challenge the churches to use the administrative agencies of this Convention in an undertaking too overwhelmingly large for any one church at that time to venture upon. However, in its earlier stages, Home Missions, through the societies that it brought into existence, undoubtedly was a much larger factor than Foreign Missions in developing among the churches the consciousness of a task to be undertaken cooperatively.

But this group sense of responsibility could scarcely be expected to have become immediately national in its scope. Societies were likely to be interested in certain sections of the frontier to the exclusion of others, and to be impressed with only one of many phases connected with the christianization of new society. Sectionalism and overlapping were defects that had to be overcome. This was effected by the organization of the American Baptist Home Missionary Society, which proceeded to use as its auxiliaries all such existing societies as chose to coöperate, while itself providing facilities for carrying the Gospel into the larger neglected areas. A delocalized character was thus given to the program of Home Missions. What the Methodists effected by witholding Conference rights from their laymen and local preachers, the Baptists compassed by the organization of a missionary society which took a national view of Home Missions. This society, moreover, through its control of funds and preaching agencies was able to step into an enlarging sphere of activities that assumed an importance in the eyes of the denomination out of all proportion to that of the individual churches. However critical the churches were of the aggressiveness of this Home Mission Society, and however sensitive to the slightest semblance of assumed authority on its part, they, nevertheless, saw functioning before their eyes an agency which was doing what they as individual churches could never have hoped to achieve. With extreme caution the Society had to proceed in the unfolding of its program, justifying every step of initiative, explaining its motives, and disavowing any coercive aims and methods. Its annual reports are an impressive exposition of how it gradually enlarged the scope of its operations, assuming more and more the tasks that earlier in the history of the denomination would have been jealously reserved by the churches for themselves.

Approximately twenty years had to elapse before the independent sensibilities of the churches were soothed by

these constant reassurances on the part of the Home Mission Society. Then an attitude of reserve and caution began to give place to one of confidence and pride. Fifty years of contact with the various aspects of frontier christianization had taught the Baptist churches that in a spirit of voluntaryism they could concentrate their energies in the securing of results vastly larger than by prosecuting independently their missionary programs.

The Congregationalists were affected by the frontier much as were the Baptists. Through the modifications of the Saybrook Platform, they were able to enter into an ingenious Plan of Union [13] with the Presbyterians, which carried many of their churches and ministers into the care of the Presbytery and General Assembly. Like the Baptists, they gave themselves enthusiastically to the organization of religious societies, and in a more rapid process of evolution, created the American Home Mission Society, the Constitution of which probably served in some sections as a model for the Baptists in the organization of their Home Missionary Society a few years later. In its operations, the American Home Mission Society encountered less criticism from its constituency than did the American Baptist Home Mission Society from the Baptists. So easily indeed did Congregationalism take to centralized control, that many of its churches were cleverly presbyterianized under the Plan of Union and eventually lost to their parent affiliation.

In an institutional way there was little that frontier christianization could do for such religious bodies as were already organized along centralized lines. With its episcopal supervision, Episcopalianism was well equipped to prosecute its missions in the Western area. If its success was comparatively limited, the explanation lies in causes other than its governmental apparatus. Lutheranism, also, had no frontier adjustments to make. It has been able to hold the vast German-speaking immigration into

[13] *Supra*, p. 114.

the American interior no less because of the conservative uniformity of its creedal emphasis than because of its effective administrative control of missionary policy. Presbyterianism has been admirably adapted to meet the needs of frontier expansion. Combining from the outset a measure of aristocratic control with a large amount of democracy, it has probably been surpassed by none in the adaptability of its government to the needs of the American frontier. Differing in its administration at the close of the nineteenth century from that at the opening of the eighteenth only in the extended application of the same principles, Presbyterianism shows that it had practically no adjustments to make in carrying forward its highly successful extensions throughout the newer parts of the country.

In the case of the larger congregationally-governed denominations, such as the Baptists and Congregationalists, the uniting of church forces to cope with frontier emergencies was in no wise allowed to impair the principle of voluntarism. No Society, Board or State Convention was ever able to gain mandatory authority over the local church. But the smaller congregational bodies were not so fortunate. Some of them were carried beyond voluntarism into connectionalism. Scattered in small groups throughout widely separated sections of the frontier, they were threatened with complete absorption into the religious beliefs and practices of the stronger bodies that environed them. They were in danger of fraying out in the attenuated life of the new settlements. The strong arm of connectionalism was needed to nourish in these feeble outlying communities a sense of the worth of their ideals and of their united strength. Visitation was necessary and a centralized authority in administering discipline. To illustrate: When the Dunkers arrived in Pennsylvania they were staunch supporters of independence in church relations, as much so as the regular Baptists. Not until Zinzendorf's Synods seemed to threaten their de-

tached groups were steps taken by them to form an Annual Conference. This meeting, however, was called a "Counsel"; its decisions were designated only as "counsel." But with the Westward expansion, which carried many of these folks into several of the mid-western states, it was proposed to create a committee of several brethren that were "experienced and sound in the faith, and send them, two and two, with the decisions of the Annual Meeting, and let them visit all the congregations in the United States, and establish them all in the same order according to example (Acts 15)." [14]

In 1850, the freedom of the local church was limited by the ruling that "no district or church has any right to make changes in anything whatsoever, contrary to ancient order, without proper investigation before, and the general consent of the Annual Meeting." A few years later, it was decided that a local congregation could not be "congregational, or act independent from the churches of our Fraternity, and still be in full union with the church, according to the Gospel and the order of the Brethren." [15] By a later ruling it was decided to discipline brethren who spoke or wrote disrespectfully of the decisions of the Annual Meeting. The final step was taken in 1882 when the Annual Meeting resolved "that hereafter all queries sent to Annual Meeting for decision, shall in all cases be decided according to the Scriptures, where there is anything direct (Thus saith the Lord) applying to the question. And all questions to which there is no direct expressed Scripture applying shall be decided according to the spirit and meaning of the Scriptures. And that decision shall be mandatory to all the churches having such cases as the decision covers. And all who shall not so heed and observe it, shall be held as not hearing the Church, and shall be dealt with accordingly." [16]

[14] Classified Minutes, 1849, Art. 8, p. 28.
[15] Classified Minutes, pp. 54, 55.
[16] Classified Minutes, p. 31.

Through the same process of centralization the Standing Committee which, at first, was a means whereby trivial and local questions were kept out of the deliberations of the Annual Meeting, became, in the course of a few years an instrument by which discussion was stifled and the will of a small minority imposed upon local churches, even in cases when the members of the congregation rebelled against this procedure. So far, indeed, did this centralization proceed that it provoked a violent reaction within the Dunker body. This, in turn, set loose liberalizing tendencies which caused the break-up of the Dunkers into their present divided condition of Old Order Brethren, Conservatives, and Progressives.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SECULARIZING OF THE RELIGIOUS MIND

By Europeans, the American people are regarded as lacking in the spirit of reverence. It provokes unfavorable comment that the tourist from America frequently fails to remove his hat upon entering a building consecrated to Christian worship and occasionally persists in whispering when religious exercises are in progress. French peasants were grieved because our soldiers during the recent World War were not always respectful toward the wayside shrine. To be sure these are relatively trifling offenses, and in themselves not sufficient to justify an adverse judgment upon the American religious attitude of mind. But it is by our own representative leaders, thoroughly acquainted with our temperament and habits, yet predisposed to a favorable estimate of their fellow citizens, that we have been weighed in the scales of reverence and found wanting. Preachers and publicists returning from Europe after extended opportunities of studying the habits of British and Continental peoples, comment unfavorably upon our disrespectful regard for the conventionalities of worship and the courtesies due to old age. Indeed, it is unnecessary to go abroad to discover by painful contrast our irreverence. The presence within our borders of Orientals—travellers, consuls, merchants, students—brings a discomforting sense of how much a young civilization, however wealthy and efficient, has to learn from an older in the matter of a deferential attitude toward high office, seniority, family lineage, and tradition.

However regrettable that at the present stage of our social development, irreverence should seem to be a conspicuous element in American life, it could hardly have been otherwise, considering the marvellous achievements of modern civilization. An age of progress is always liable to look scornfully at periods that only marked time. In the midst of inventions and discoveries, men are prone to regard with contempt generations that were unable to add to the conveniences and comforts of life or to make progress in reading the secrets of Nature. It usually turns out that inventions of the most far-reaching importance are basically simple, and that a scientific discovery comes about in a most unexpected manner. Inventors are, therefore, the last to think of claiming finality for their devices, and scientists are constantly on the *qui vive* for additions to their knowledge. It is not strange, therefore, that having perfected devices seemingly so simple, men wonder why others long before did not stumble upon the same inventions, or that in chancing upon some hidden reservoir of Nature's power, one generation marvels that its predecessor did not happen to anticipate the discovery.

This indeed was the attitude of Renaissance society toward Mediævalism. Appreciative no less of Nature than of human personality, handing down to posterity wheelbarrows, tools of warfare, and printing presses in strange conjunction with immortal masterpieces of sculpture and painting, as eager to venture upon the high seas as to recover a classic civilization, alike wonderful for its myriad mindedness and teeming energy, the Renaissance developed, withal, a shocking secularism and irreverence. Dante, its most powerful exponent, dared to associate the heroes of pagan mythology with those of Sacred Writ, to pour ridicule upon friars and monks, and to cast into hell personages no less illustrious than the successors of Peter. Popes themselves jested about religion and opened their court to masquerades and vulgar buffoonery. Moral conventions were roughly set aside. Young people, mentally

and socially overdeveloped, became immodest and vulgar. An enthusiasm for the customs of classic days displaced appreciation for the heritage of the more immediate mediæval past.

Great as were the changes wrought by the Renaissance in the spirit and institutions of its times, those of our age have been vastly more epochal. Few, if any, of the inventions of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are to be compared with the steam engine, the spinning-jenny, the trans-Atlantic cable, the telephone, and wireless communication. Nor was wealth accumulated upon such a gigantic scale as during the last few generations. And in no country more than, if indeed as much as in America, have the benefits of invention and discovery been brought to bear so directly upon the rank and file of citizens. Farmers, housewives, employees of the factory, have all profited by the comfort and convenience of science. Even boys are "tuning in" to catch messages across a continent—youthful fashioners and masters of apparatus that to their grandfathers would have seemed almost weird. Is it at all strange, therefore, that these lads should be somewhat disrespectful to seniors, who conventionally disposed and immersed in routine, find themselves confused and almost unable to keep pace with the latest strides of science? Remembering, moreover, that this is not a situation peculiar to the present generation, but shared in a large though lesser degree by the last two or three, should it not be readily apparent, why the American people find themselves in the midst of a growing spirit of iconoclastic self-reliance, of impatient disregard for seasoned methods of operation and of unsentimental disrespect toward the aged?

In appropriating and developing the virgin resources of this country, the rising generation has felt little if any handicap because of inexperience and limited education. Throughout wide areas of America, the getting of wealth has been largely a matter of felling trees, burning stumps,

plowing, seeding, harvesting, threshing—a process maintained by brawn rather than brains. When the farm has ceased to give bountiful harvests because of shiftless unscientific methods of tillage, there has always been a frontier available for fresh exploitation. So long as a man has been physically strong, he has had an opportunity in America to make money. And physical strength is the pride of youth. A frontier showers its bounties upon muscular prowess. It has slight sentimental regard, however, for the experience and wisdom of waning physical years. In a new country, so long as a man can bear his share of manual toil, he is viewed as an asset to the community. When, however, his working days have ceased, he is largely an encumbrance Preferably he is left "back East" to be buried in the old family graveyard. Aboriginal people, given like frontiersmen to nomadic ways of living, have been notoriously indifferent to the aged. In a highly developed social order where Nature's resources have been appropriated and somewhat worked, men of middle and even of advanced years find protection in the economic worth of their experience and vocational skill. In an older order of things, wealth in so far as acquired by toil rather than inherited, comes more to the middle-aged, and in many instances indeed, to those advanced in years. For success thus attained by steadfastness and the wise decisions of a trained mind, the young respect their elders and turn to them for counsel.

In a newly established community a short succession of good crops may bring the settler into sudden competence. A cattle range in a few years may make the young rancher wealthy. To be sure, it may prove otherwise. A cycle of rainless seasons may strip the homesteader of his last chattel and a snowstorm may drive the cattle raiser into bankruptcy. Success in a new country is a matter of energy and initiative with Nature playing a capricious and at times decisive rôle. To cope with these emergencies of fortune, the men and women of an older generation

are as powerless as are their less matured sons and daughters. Indeed, it often happens that they have less resiliency to recover from the shock of crippling reverses.

It has operated also to the detriment of reverence in American life that opportunity has been so mindful of the average citizen as to make him somewhat careless about his economic future. In the midst of natural resources so largely undeveloped, and a population relatively small for maintaining the industries of development, the American soon comes to realize that he has little cause to worry about the morrow. Unlike the toiler in the vast industrial systems of Europe, the bread line gives him little concern. Rarely is he anxious about his job. He is confident that if one fails him today, he can secure another tomorrow. If his work becomes irksome, he doesn't fear to abandon it for an adventure in some different vocation. With opportunity agricultural, commercial and professional inviting him on every side, he feels the impulse to strike out for himself and become his own master. Confronting uncounseled, situations not anticipated, he soon becomes resourceful and self-reliant. Success far exceeding his expectations induces self-confidence and the feeling that he is equal to any emergency. Accustomed to working out his problems for himself unaided by precedent, and in an atmosphere of experimentation, he acquires the disposition to pay slight deference to his seniors or to the ways of the past. Always fascinating to seriously-minded, jaded, economically-anxious Europeans, because of his elastic step, radiant countenance and buoyant spirit, the American is none the less to them the embodiment of profane iconoclasm and a "destroyer of the gods."

The Revolution is another factor that has made American society critical of older civilizations and prone to "spread eagleism." Through the superficial prejudiced work of some historians, the American public to this day persists in holding the British people as a whole, responsible for the blundering arrogance and arbitrariness of

their Hanoverian sovereign, and the stupid, servile diplomacy of a few of his admirers. Slight pains have been taken to point out that many Britishers were entirely out of accord with the Government's policy, and well-wishers of the Revolutionary cause. The consequence is that although King George has long passed out, and his constitutional ideas with him, in the mind of large numbers of our populace there survives a rankling resentment against everything British. This resentment obscures to many of our people the strides that democracy has taken in Britain during a hundred and fifty years, and the essential unity of political ideals in England and America today. Coöperation of America with Britain in a program of world democratization is thereby largely obstructed. America seems to pose as the censor of British institutions, assuming, indeed, an attitude of superiority to all civilizations other than her own. Obsessed with the hallucination induced by these resentful memories of the Revolutionary struggle, that diplomatists of all nations keep ceaseless vigil to concoct schemes for her embarrassment and undoing, America draws back at the mere suggestion of an entangling alliance, and pursuing a course of lonely isolation makes a shibboleth of the American precedent of doing things a little differently than they have ever been done by other diplomatists. In superior belittlement of the democratic aspirations and achievements of other nations, America's ideals and political institutions come to be lauded by far too many of her citizens as the first and only successful experimentation with the principles of democracy.

In this atmosphere of iconoclasm and complacent self-reliance, due as shown above, to invention and scientific achievement, the rapid accumulation of vast material resources and the memories of the Revolution, religion in America has had to function. The result has been that, however much religion has sought to resist and stand apart from the spirit of its environment, it, nevertheless,

has become infected with what may be termed the spirit of secularism. Just what is meant by this characterization may be shown most vividly by considering the exceptional features encountered by religion in its contact with frontier life.

In newly settled districts the facilities for worship were extremely simple and unæsthetic. In the earliest stage, the itinerant preacher gathered a group of neighbors in a cabin, where without the slightest ministry of churchly symbols or architectural beauty, hymns were sung, prayers offered, and an exhortation from the Word of God. The camp meeting, next in the evolution of frontier worship, offered nothing by way of worshipful environment save the simple natural beauty of a grove of trees on a sloping green, and the awesomeness of night shadows relieved by the flare of torches amid the trees. Sometimes the schoolhouse afforded a sanctuary for frontier worshippers. In a chamber providing protection from the discomforts of cold and rain, it was the warm genuineness of neighborly Christian fellowship that made the congregation insensitive to the severe simplicity, unadornment and positive ugliness of the surroundings. By and by, the meetinghouse emerged, built out of the conveniences and comforts that, otherwise, would have enriched the homes of the community. There was little, if any, superfluous outlay upon the æsthetic. Boxlike in shape, with large windows of frosted or gaudily painted glass, long reaches of misfitting smoke pipes always seemingly in danger of falling, rain streaks in the plaster, a gorgeously curtained pulpit enclosure, benches or straight backed pews, there was little in the church edifice of the frontier for the cultivation of the æsthetic sense. In this oddly severe uninviting environment, our fathers, too poor to provide a better, worshipped for generations. We, today, amply endowed with resources to provide for ourselves the most stimulating structural environment for worship, lavish our monies upon the erection of monstrosities devoid of ecclesiastical effect,

"plants" well named, where the craving for efficiency is too often exhausted in providing for plenty of exits, window space, good ventilation, comfortable seating, an up-to-date heating plant, partitioned Sunday school rooms, a well equipped kitchen, a gymnasium and a swimming pool. To be sure, there is nothing strange in this phenomenon. The present generation has not yet outgrown the frontier church architecture. Our church architecture is a carry-over from the days of the frontier, reflecting the affluence of builders, devoid, unfortunately, of the sense of the beautiful and of God.

But the preacher no less than the church structure reflected his frontier environment. During the earliest stages of the westward movement, while settlement was in progress immediately west of the Alleghenies and in the Ohio valley, the ministers as a class were vocationally untrained. The Methodist circuit riders were recruited directly from the lay ranks. Though required to cover definite assignments of reading while on the round of his circuit, there was no preliminary academic requirement debarring an earnest capable layman from the brotherhood of the Conference. A large proportion of the Baptist preachers were also academically untrained. Only a relatively small number of Christian and Campbellite ministers had anything more than the most elementary schooling. In both these bodies there was considerable prejudice against education as calculated to dampen spiritual zeal. The Episcopalians in their earliest General Conventions devoted considerable discussion to the expediency of lowering their requirements of ministerial training. A similar tendency toward the enlistment of non-classically educated ministers manifested itself among the Presbyterians. The schism that brought into existence the Cumberland Presbytery, later known as the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, arose through the strong feeling among the churches of western Kentucky, that Presbyterianism should, at least temporarily, depart from its classical re-

quirements in ministerial education in order to provide ministers for the large number of pastorless churches created in the Second Awakening. The tendency, in almost all the aggressive Protestant bodies, to speed up the academical training of ministerial candidates, with a view to supplying the rapidly multiplying calls for pastoral leadership was a prime factor in the launching of the many small colleges.[1] In these it was planned that in conjunction with academic studies, ministerial students could secure such limited instruction in the most vital fields of theological preparation as would enable them to pass immediately from their college graduation into the responsibilities of parish work.

It was not unusual for the ministers of the more undeveloped districts to give part of their time to the oversight of churches while devoting the remainder to secular pursuits. This "part time" arrangement fitted well into frontier needs. To ministers mentally undisciplined and untrained in methods of sermonic preparation, it gave a temporary retreat, enabling them to replenish their store of pulpit exhortations. Frequently it was necessitated by the inability of struggling congregations to provide a full-time stipend for the pastor. By farming for a few years, many a preacher was able to rehabilitate his finances and to make some provision for the education of his family. But having paid his debts and provided for the schooling of his children, he eagerly betook himself again to the loved vocation of preaching.

Methodism beyond other denominations succeeded in conserving the usefulness of its unstationed preachers. Kept in Conference standing, they were provided with considerable occasional preaching. This tended to keep alive the circuit passion in some who otherwise would have chosen to remain in a secular calling.

Ministers drafted directly from secular pursuits, or subjected at most to a short educational preparation, could

[1] *Supra*, p. 65.

scarcely fail to give to the churches a type of preaching quite different from that of the more highly educated clergy of the East. The reasoned discourse was not likely to prevail in the frontier pulpit. Neither the training nor aptitude of the backwoods preacher inclined him to elaborate argumentation. It was with the Scriptures that he felt entirely at home. These he could ponder when on horseback and amid the snatched opportunities of a manner of life in which routine and orderly duty played little part. With few facilities for study, he brought to his audience a hortatory style of discourse, in which the marrow of the Scriptures was the most edifying and satisfying portion. Disdainful of literary embellishment and rhetorical effect, he acquired a forceful directness of speech which went far toward keeping his exhortation from flattening down to repetitious platitude. What he lacked in finish was atoned for in fire. His figures of speech he aptly chose from the homely walks of life, not always with due regard for delicacy and refinement, but with the saving grace of humor and playfulness. In daily contact with folks, who because of their isolated life on the frontier were likely to become narrow and set in their views, the preacher easily fell into the ways of the controversialist.[2] Upon the slightest provocation, he was liable to substitute for his carefully thought out Bible homily a slashing attack upon Arminians, Calvinists, Newlights, education, missions, or religious societies. The possibility of controversial fireworks attracted many whose religious interest had deteriorated into curiosity and a liking for debate. Upon some, of course, this pulpit tendency to controversy palled. It drove them to the organization of a religious body whose distinguishing interest was to be a studied indifference to everything that savored of partyism." [3]

Upon the pioneer ministers of the outpost districts there devolved many other duties beside those of preaching and

[2] *Supra*, p. 118 f. [3] *Supra*, p. 108 f.

of pastoral visitation. When settlement was in its earliest stage, and newcomers were strained to the limit in bringing their farms under cultivation, in building fences and barns, and in substituting a comfortable house for the hastily erected cabin, the preacher had to take the lead in working out the various problems connected with church building. To solicit subscriptions, to secure a church site, to assemble the material, and to superintend the building process were only a few of his tasks. He was usually a prominent factor in the erection of the schoolhouse and the town hall. To supervise the collection of a community library often devolved upon him. Religious societies—Education, Bible, Tract, Missionary—all called for his time and attention. Far beyond the boundaries of his own charge he was expected to carry inspiration and leadership to such as had pushed further into the interior.[4]

As a consequence of duties so miscellaneous and administrative in character, the frontier preacher became a man of affairs. Thoroughly trained graduates of the eastern seminaries, studiously inclined at the outset of their missionary pastorates on the frontier, in the pressure of distracting journeying and church building, gradually lost their passion for books or hopelessly despaired of being able to find time for extensive reading and sermonizing. Pulpit themes became practical in character, and literary style lost the fullness and polish of that of the cultured East. This change, of course, was not due entirely to the miscellaneous character of ministerial duties. The character of the frontier audience also did much toward making for directness of pulpit utterance. Largely shut off from the leisure and literary facilities of long-established society, the people of the West shrank from the strain of following ornate elaborate expositions of truth. To them,

[4] The various duties of the home missionary are nicely set forth in the Instructions issued by the American Home Missionary Society to its agents. These may be consulted in the author's "Sourcebook," p. 423.

literary embellishment savored of artificiality. Direct and open in their ways of dealing with each other, they demanded the same qualities in the minister.

In the course of a hundred years, while thousands of American preachers have been thus absorbed in the administrative tasks connected with the planting of churches and kindred institutions in frontier communities, and have been influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by the demands of new settlers for a pulpit message, simple, direct and searching, the American type of minister has been in the process of making. With a preference for the topical style of sermon, a ready fund of illuminating and human anecdotes, a conversational manner of delivery bordering at times upon bluntness and colloquialism, and a passion for a church membership numbering hundreds or thousands, entailing large administrative responsibility, he stands out as the conspicuous product of the frontier stage in our national development. Outclassed by the metropolitan divines of England and Scotland in respect of philosophical range, beauty of diction, and homiletical art, he readily finds both in Britain and America a constituency appreciative of his buoyant enthusiasm, optimistic outlook on life, easy and approachable manner and efficiency in the realm of administration.

But the most outstanding feature in the life of the American minister has yet to be mentioned—its nonclericalism. Probably in no other country as in America does the clergy come into such intimate contact with everyday secularized callings and activities. The vast majority of the preachers of America refuse to don a ministerial garb. Many of them feel gratified at their ability to move among their fellow-citizens without being recognized as preachers. In the rounds of pastoral visitation, they prefer to dress as laymen. In the same type of dress, some, iconoclastically inclined, proceed to the pulpit. To not a few, the title of Reverend is offensive. It provokes slight comment when a minister, in order to provide more ade-

quately for his family, or to procure for himself a greater degree of congeniality and efficiency, ceases to preach and turns his energies into some other calling. On the other hand, ecclesiastical conventionalities close few doors to the layman. Congregations are ofttimes agreeably surprised to discover that the speaker who preached so effectively was a layman with no official right to administer to them the Sacraments. Several of America's distinguished religious leaders are proud of their lay status.

Several factors enter into the explanation of why the borderline between the clergy and the laity in America is thus obscured and easily crossed from either side. Its religious life has been highly evangelical in character. Ritualistic types of worship have attracted small followings. Roman Catholicism has sacerdotalized only a section of American society. America has had no established church with its social cleavage between conformist and dissenter, and its obsequious obeisance to the ecclesiastical dignitary. Within the Methodist and Protestant Episcopal churches, the aristocratic tendencies of Episcopacy have been vigilantly held in check by constitutional safeguards.

All these considerations must be reckoned with in accounting for the lay instinct of American religious life. Yet in themselves they are scarcely adequate as an explanation. The exigencies of frontier life have played a rôle, prominent, if not indeed the most conspicuous.

Whatever his inclination, lay or clerical, the frontier preacher had to live largely on the plane of the people. Religious meetings could not be other than informal—in a cabin, by the wayside, within schoolhouse, or town hall. It was difficult to provide the paraphernalia for ritualistic worship. The preacher's life was spent largely on horseback or in the homes of the people. He had his contacts daily with many phases of life. If it fell to him to superintend the building of the church, he had business dealings with a wide range of the community. The fact that

a large proportion of the frontier ministers were part-time preachers is significant. For months or even years, these went back to the farm, to the school, or store. Careers thus deflected from one to another phase of activity, interrupted from time to time in their ministerial functionings by the urgencies of material needs, were not likely to become, or to continue to be, ecclesiasticized in their interests. Hundreds of frontier preachers could scarcely determine whether they should be classed as ministers, or farmers, or teachers. The civic tasks of leadership in newly forming communities, devolving largely upon the ministers, also helped to obscure the boundary lines between the lay and clerical callings. Thus from frontier exigencies continuing across the range of several generations, almost indeed, to our own day, American society has come to look upon the minister as essentially a citizen among his fellows, deriving his authority as an interpreter of truth and a moral leader more from his uprightness, devotion and genuine human interest than from ordination unction or ecclesiastical connection.

It was at the time when the current of Western immigration first began to assume large proportions that the missionary impulse of the churches began to find expression in the organization of religious societies. In conception, the religious society, undoubtedly, was not indigenous but borrowed from Great Britain, where a few years before, the enterprise of foreign missions had been committed to societies rather than to the existing organizations of the various churches. Early in the seventeenth century similar societies had been organized for the reformation of manners and the culture of the devotional life, as also, half a century later, the Moravians and Wesleyans had formed their "Bands." Why the Christian people of America followed this British precedent is not entirely clear. The documents of the period do not state what was expected from societies that was impossible of realization through the normal channels of the church. Undoubtedly it was

felt that greater coöperation in a vast national and world enterprise could be secured by eliminating as largely as possible everything that savored of denominationalism.[5] Probably it was hoped that enthusiasm might be stimulated through the use of newly created rather than long existing agencies. Certainly the British societies had received enthusiastic patronage from unexpected quarters. But in all likelihood a more potent influence in bringing these societies into existence was the question in many minds as to whether or not the projected program of missionary labor involving such a wide range of human needs, social and humanitarian as well as spiritual, comported with the divine origin and the high sacred function of the church. Scruples on this point could be easily removed and the dignity of the Church safeguarded by entrusting the project of missions to societies rather than to the churches. For these, and perhaps for other reasons, societies sprang up in an almost bewildering range of objective. A smaller number, unquestionably, would have served the purpose better. Nevertheless, in spite of some overlapping, they proved highly effective. They raised funds that for the times were substantial; they enlisted and trained hundreds of candidates for the ministry; they founded and financed colleges; they broadcasted tons of Christian literature. Withal, they made an honorable beginning in the evangelization of the Oriental peoples.

Most of these societies were the instruments of the churches. They drew their membership largely from the churches, and their motive force was sustained by the cooperation of the pulpits. No one seriously questions that the efficiency of these societies was an immediate product of the spiritual vitality of the churches. Apart from the churches their existence would have been short and their ministry fitful and anæmic. And yet these societies set before the Christian public of America the phenomenon of an extensive social and religious program undertaken

[5] *Supra*, p. 111.

and carried through by agencies acting apart from the Church. For the first time, the churches in this country found themselves acting no longer as the exclusive patrons and guardians of the moral and spiritual interest of society, but sharing this responsibility with a complex of rival societies. On the surface, the Church seemed to have suffered a serious reverse. Her prestige had been undermined. The exclusiveness of her mission had been invaded. Her preachers no longer were the sole fountains of Bible knowledge. Travelling missionaries had arisen, distributers of tracts, and agents of the Bible Society. It became a debated question whether a Bible deposited in a home was not of greater value than a sermon preached in a pulpit. A tract that could be carefully read and passed from one to another was placed in disparaging contrast with the preacher's message that dissipates with its deliverance.

So far had this tendency to overlook the primal churchly significance of the Church progressed in the course of a generation, that within the fold of Presbyterianism a party arose which, along with other purposes, set itself to the task of recovering for the Church what it had seemed to lose by the encroachment of the religious societies. To regard the Old-School Presbyterians as exclusively or even primarily concerned about the doctrines of hereditary sin, regeneration, or the atonement, is quite erroneous. They were far more anxious to arrest what they viewed as the dangerous tendency of having religious societies put into sacrilegious competition with the Church. Old-School Presbyterianism was really an "Oxford Movement" in America, designed not as in England to reunite Protestantism with historic Catholicism, but to reënthrone the churches of America as the exclusive agency in disseminating the Oracles of divine truth.[6]

[6] The objections raised against voluntary societies are set forth in a lengthy contribution to the *Literary and Theological Review*, March, 1837, Article VIII. These were subjected to a searching reply by Enoch Pond in the columns of the same periodical September, 1837, Article V.

At bottom, the anti-missionary movement was of the same character. Its promoters did not mean to be niggardly, narrow-minded obstructionists. What they feared was that the enthusiasm engendered by the missionary movement was likely to ultimately obscure the sense of God's sovereignty and ever-present help, and that there would be a reaction of discouragement and indifference within the churches. It was inevitable, of course, that this anti-missionary movement should have its camp-followers—the smug, worldly-minded and ill-informed. In time, indeed, these followers possessed themselves of the camp itself, and the anti-missionary crusade became the symbol of narrow-mindedness, insularity and unprogressiveness. A cause emanating in a jealous regard for the sanctity of the Church and the sovereignty of God was deserving of better fortunes.

Both the Old-School and anti-missionary causes lost out. They struggled valiantly and died hard. But they could not survive. The churches of America have continued to function through societies. The dignity of the Church has not been seriously compromised thereby. Discerning people realize that without the spiritually regenerative ministry of the Church, few of our noblest societies could long survive. Yet in a measure, the spirit of the Old-School protest survives, especially in the oft repeated admonition of church leaders to beware of substituting machinery for spiritual dynamics. It may be said, indeed, that the frontier has passed down to the present generation a secularized church, so much so that religious workers of today have to be on constant guard lest the vast network of organization designed to keep society in contact with spiritual realities, should not obtrude as an end in itself, and cut off vital contact with God.

While the religious mind of America under the pressure of frontier conditions was in process of secularization, it was also being socialized. Whatever may have been the theory of frontiersmen respecting the function of religion

and of the Church, the urgency of the situation operated toward the intermingling of divine worship and social fellowship. In the stress and severe simplicity of pioneer life, new settlers had little time and few facilities for conventional social intercourse. Some relief from the strain of engrossing toil they found in the occasional events that brought them together, such as the barn raising, the "bee," funerals and weddings. But it was church-going that afforded more periodic opportunity for neighborly and community contact. However much needed doing, manual labor could not be sustained seven days a week. And the meeting house had ample accommodations for all to greet each other. It developed, therefore, that the church became the social centre of the community. People went to church almost as much to meet each other as to attend upon the means of Grace. Through the monotony and strain of week-days, they looked forward to the occasion that brought husbands, wives, sons and daughters into weekly contact. The enormous audiences that congregated on camp grounds are easily explained when account is taken of the social hunger of thousands who found in the three or four days of the camp meeting facilities, not only for singing and religious admonition, but also, between sessions, of reviewing together the experiences of the long weeks and months. On a lesser scale, this was true of the more frequent religious service in the cabin or meeting house. It is not to be concluded, however, that the frontier churches undertook to provide amusements for the community. There is evidence that even in the most rudimentary stages of community development, the church took an uncompromising attitude towards amusements, especially the dance. They socialized religion in that the church while ministering to the cravings of worship provided a rendezvous for the women to do their gossiping, the young people to conduct their courting, and the men in so far as Sabbath conscience would permit, to arrange for neighborly borrowing and trading. The idea of a social policy for the

church never entered the minds of these earnest, simple-minded folk. None the less, the church became identified in their thinking with much more than hymn singing, praying and listening to the sermon. To them, it became the symbol of a ministry more human and homely than it was to the more conventionally-minded of the East, where people went to God's house with no thought of satisfying social cravings that were cared for through various other channels.

It is not surprising that with the movement of people from the country and small towns to the cities, the ranks of the non-church-going have been largely increased inasmuch as these have failed to find in the city church the social satisfaction of the simpler meeting house at the crossroads. Nor is it strange that even in the city churches, which recruit their additions so largely from the country and small-town organizations, there should have survived in the demand for the unappropriated pew and in the greetings of worshippers before and after service, considerable of the social atmosphere of frontier worship. Much, of course, of the social worship of the early days has passed away. Enough remains to show the contrast between the worshipful atmosphere of divine service in European cathedrals and chapels, and the social atmosphere that surrounds the conduct of worship in American churches.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHALLENGE OF THE HEROIC

Human nature has seldom failed to respond to the challenge of the heroic. The commonest of folks are surprisingly appreciative of chivalry and daring, while forceful characters that have shaped the course of civilization have been enamored of struggle and sacrifice rather than of ease and enjoyment. Explorers have experienced little difficulty in finding fellow adventurers for their hazardous expeditions, nor have soldiers been disappointed in calling for volunteers to risk their lives in the perilous task of spying out the enemies' lines. Mazzini's challenge to his young Italian compatriots was "Come, suffer with me." A like summons came to Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Paul. Jesus also understood the romance of suffering. It was when "lifted up" that He confidently expected "to draw all men" to Himself. Though highly considerate and sympathetic, He had no hesitancy in exacting of His followers the renunciation of their all—property, friends, domestic ties, life itself. Seed processes had suggested to Him that life germinates in death.[1] He, therefore, resolved discipleship into cross-bearing. Nor did He make any mistake in thus summoning His followers to a communion of martyrdom. Though not always able to comprehend the philosophy of the Cross, they cheerfully bowed to this imperative of faith, so much so indeed, that from the majestic exhibition of their sufferings arose the aphorism, "The blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the Church."

[1] John, Chap. XII, Verse 26.

First came the persecutions under the Roman emperors. Because of the Jewish ancestry of their faith, their humble social status, their indifference to brutalizing sports, their testimony against idols and pagan shrines, and their seemingly unpatriotic refusal to participate in emperor-worship, the early Christians were ridiculed, mobbed, ostracized, committed to dungeons, banished to the mines, and fed to the lions. Yet the Christian cause, far from languishing, gained in vigor and adherents. Converts multiplied and morale grew more defiant. Throughout its entire history, Christianity never made more rapid progress than during the period when its enemies were bent upon nothing short of its extermination. And it was only a few years after Diocletian's cleverly conceived policy of persecution directed against the organization, property, and leadership of the Church, that Constantine, impressed with the persistence of Christianity, in the most critical hour of his career resolved not only to accord to it a place among the recognized cults, but also to manifest his personal preference for a faith that had succeeded best when repression was applied with least restraint.

The rapid extension of European monasticism was an early result of the benevolent attitude of the Roman government to Christianity. Thousands of earnest souls, with commingled emotions of disgust and despair, withdrew from the entanglements of what seemed a scandalous compromise of Christian standards. Some retired to caves, isolated ravines, and pillars; a larger number to the more hospitable cloister. Thus it was as a recoil from a complacent non-sacrificial type of Christian living that hermitism and monasticism arose. The former, of course, was fanatical, and entirely subversive of the foundations of human society. Yet it enjoyed passing favor because of the fact that it imposed discomfort and grave hardships in the interests of a spiritual ideal. Monasticism did not exact sacrifices comparable with the severities of hermit-

ism. It offered considerable material comfort, the fellowship of kindred spirits, and a refuge from the remorseless individualistic struggle of the world outside. The most enthusiastic admirer of monasticism would hesitate to put all the inmates of the cloister in the class of heroes. Yet the monastic ideal was decidedly heroic. Its Rule was framed in no small part to repel the effeminate. The ephemeral popularity of its successive Orders, each trying to secure a wider and more lasting influence than its predecessor by means of an increasingly vigorous application of self-repression, is an impressive indication of how throughout the Middle Ages there was always a goodly company of stout souls to whom Christianity was most attractive when it was most exacting. No explanation of the rapid extension, persistency and revivals of monasticism is at all adequate which fails to reckon with its summons to the heroic.

Many monks, to be sure, were leisure-loving and self-indulgent. But monasticism may be justly proud of its succession of missionaries who bore courageous testimony against the coarse moral standards of their age, and lighted up the darkness of the barbarian hinterland through their self-effacing ministry of evangelism. One thinks of Patrick, Columba and Columban, Gregory and Augustine, Willibrod and Willibald, Wolfgang and Boniface—a few whose illustrious names have been handed down to posterity, while those of others probably as brave and devoted have been lost in the obscurity and wreckage of the Dark Ages.

Like monasticism, the crusading movement benefited from men's eagerness to play the rôle of heroism. Historical investigation of recent years has clearly shown how multitudes that donned the insignia of the Cross were lured to the Holy Land through hope of material betterment, rather than from a chivalrous regard for the desecrated shrines of Jerusalem. No less a personage than Pope Urban endorsed the crusades as a relief to the

economic strain upon overpopulated areas of Europe.[2] Nevertheless it is a shallow interpretation, indeed, that views the march of pilgrim multitudes to the Holy Land as only an emigration movement. Behind the burning eloquence of Bernard of Clairvaux, which contributed so largely to the momentum of the second crusade, there was something more than a solicitude for the economic stability of society weakened by feudal strife and overpopulation. A staunch believer in the purifying power of asceticism, Bernard recognized in the Crusades, as in Cistercianism, a means of elevating morals and revitalizing the Church.[3] With him the crusading enterprise and Cistercianism were companion movements designed to rehabilitate the heroic ideal. How many shared with Bernard in this estimate of the moral significance of the Crusader's summons to arms, completely baffles reckoning. But if the facts were known, possibly it might appear that into other crusades than the second, if not indeed into all, the element of the heroic entered as a recruiting incentive.

One of the unfortunate effects of the crusading movement was that it injected into European society a frenzied antagonism to heresy. This sentiment the Papacy was able to turn against heretics much nearer home than were those of the Holy Land. First it was the Albigenses, who in burning cities and on the field of battle perished by the thousand in their brave resistance to the Catholic armies of the North. Later the Waldenses in large numbers fell before the cunning of the relentless Inquisition. No more heroic struggle ennobles the history of Christianity than does that of the stout resistance of these anathematized heretics who died fighting not for larger boundaries in the East, nor for the sanctity of Christian shrines, but for the worthier cause of a spiritualized conception of religion.

A deepened sense of humaneness and a recognition of

[2] See his speech delivered at Clement, reprinted in Robinson's "Readings in European History," Vol. I, p. 314.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 330 f.

the economic unwisdom of destroying or banishing otherwise good citizens solely because of creedal differences, at length brought to European civilization the limited toleration of religious opinions. And yet under the institution of the State Church, persecution more or less vigorous has remained almost to our own day. Socially ostracized, burdened with galling church rates, debarred from the exercise of the franchise and ineligible for positions of civic trust, the non-conformist, in his loyalty to free-church ideals, his forbearance and his persistent fight for larger rights, has carried down into the present much of the martyr spirit of bygone days. And his heroism has made its impression upon society. As between the State Church, requiring so little of its members, and the Free Church, entirely dependent upon the spontaneous support of its followers, multitudes have shown their preference for the latter. Some of the staunchest advocates of church disestablishment have arisen within the ranks of Churchmen themselves, as they have come to see that an institution gains favor with men when it asks for much both in money and moral support.

It has also fallen to the Church to feel the ill effects of the disorders that have overtaken Europe in the long course of its feuds, its racial and national antipathies and its unsanitary ways of living. War has been a frequent disturber of the Church in her peaceful constructive administration. Again and again have her properties been devastated as when, with the sweep of barbarism into the decadent Roman Empire, feudal chieftains carried their depredations into rival fiefs. The march of armies across the fair fields of France, during the Hundred Years' War, left in its path broad lanes of smoldering ruins, and in the Thirty Years' War large areas of Germany were reduced to a deadened waste of social and economic exhaustion. Pestilence has proved almost as discomforting and disruptive as war. In these critical periods of stress it was through the chivalrous initiative of the clergy that life

and property were frequently protected from the lust of invaders. It was the Church, moreover, that idealistically denounced warfare, and interposed with practical methods of promoting peace and limiting and regulating the conduct of battle. With her cathedrals and cloisters rarely enjoying immunity from the wrath of armies and the desolation of plague, it devolved upon the Church, through heroic reconstructive effort in rehabilitating ruins and repeopling monasteries, to furnish courageous testimony to her stalwart idealism and irrepressible faith. In the aftermath of the World War, when the foundations of moral and spiritual enthusiasm have seemed about to fail, it surely ought not to be difficult for the present generation at least to cherish a genuine appreciation for the heroic steadfastness of the Church of the Middle Ages in refusing to abandon its altruistic ministry, amid the repeated discouragements and embarrassments of military commotions and economic upheavals.

It will be evident from the foregoing, that European Christianity has rarely been lacking in the stimulus and enrichment of persecution or challenging social and economic emergencies.

Turning to the course of Christianity in America, contrasts are immediately apparent. To the crusading movement there has been no counterpart in American religious history. Modern in spirit, American civilization has proved inhospitable to the ascetic ideal. Relatively few monasteries have been established within its borders. Nor have the American people known much of the horrors of war. Compared with European conflicts, the intermittent Indian Wars, however exasperating in their frequency and indecisiveness, were trivial military incidents. Judged by European standards, even the Revolutionary War, however epochal in its fruits, was merely a military episode with trifling loss of life and an inconsiderable wastage of material resources. The Civil War, to be sure, was warfare in all his grim awfulness. Its armies were large; its

battles at close quarters were long drawn out; its casualty lists were appalling; its drain upon civilian resources was enormous. Yet it was a struggle of short duration, in sharp contrast with the prolonged conflicts of transatlantic nations.

The fact, however, that compared with Europe, wars in America have been few and short, should not obscure the chivalrous religious history connected with such wars as it has had. It was in no uncertain terms that the New England pulpits boldly remonstrated against the colonial policy of Britain; nor was any service more spontaneous than that of the colonial clergy, as soldiers under arms, recruiting agents or chaplains. Some religious groups experienced grave hardships from the Revolution—the Quakers and Moravians because of their unswerving devotion to pacificism; the Episcopalians for a church attachment that made lukewarm or divided their allegiance to the cause of revolt; some of the Methodist itinerant preachers because of their British extraction and ecclesiastical affiliation with Wesley. However inevitable amid the prejudices and passions of war the discomforts imposed upon these several groups, yet it was loyalty to principle at the price of physical violence and expatriation that inspired one of the stirring chapters in American religious history.

During the Civil War, a splendid record of achievement was made by the Christian Commission, created and sustained as it was by the churches of the North, in rendering Christ-like service to lonesome, tempted, wounded and dying soldiers. And in the hour of triumph, none had ampler right to rejoice than the struggling home missionary churches of the Northwest, that in a critical moment, when the swing of victory was uncertain, threw large proportions of their congregations into the shattered ranks of the Northern armies.[4]

[4] "Who does not know that the loyalty of the West, which along with the East has gone down against the South as did the hordes of

Colonization is a phase of history that, like war, brings heroism to the surface. However pressing the economic strain of European society, it required considerable courage for the colonist of the seventeenth century to face the hazards of transatlantic passage and the inhospitable strangeness of living in far-removed America. Hence the romance of American colonial history, and the large and constantly increasing literature relating to the earliest experiences of the first colonizing companies. It is always stimulating to read of their high hopes in coming to these shores, of the institutional developments connected with the earliest phases of their group life, and of the shifts and ventures of their pioneer days yielding, after years of thrift and steadfast toil to substantial material comfort. And religion, be it recalled, was a powerful factor in the inception and actual shaping of the course of colonization. Not to mention the presence of priests in the expeditions of Spain and France to Florida, Arizona, California and New France, and the zeal of even the lay adventurers in enforcing the conversion of the pagans at the point of the sword, the first English voyagers sailed under the auspices of the Church. Chaplains accompanied Drake and Cavendish. Hawkins shipped in a bark named *Jesus*.

Northern Europe, has been produced to a large extent by the sturdy influence of the pioneer missionaries? Everywhere patriotic, everywhere rallying the people and using their pulpits for recruiting stations, they have but reaped the fruit of their former teachings in the enlistment-rolls that have often taken away their sons and the strength of their temporal support. By responses to a recent circular, we learn that the Congregational churches of Illinois have sent to the war one in *eight* of their male members; Wisconsin, one in *nine;* Minnesota, one in *seven;* Iowa, one in *five;* making in all several Ironside regiments. All this, besides their influence upon enlistment in the community generally. And now, as the war sickens our heart by hope deferred, they are foremost in inspiriting the people, in ministering moral and sanitary succor to the braves of the army, and in sustaining the hands of the Government.

"If you would trace the practical effect of this evangelizing enterprise, you will find that the seam along which our Government has cracked asunder, was the Southern line of our general Home Missionary operations." *Home Missionary*, August, 1863.

Raleigh's maps bore the imprint of one holding a cross in his hand. The project of colonizing Virginia, though launched primarily for dividends and the incidental betterment of England's paupers, received the hearty endorsement of clergymen high in the councils of the Church, who saw in the enterprise a parallel to Abraham's emigration from Haran to Canaan.[5] Whatever the motive of its first proprietor, Maryland was designed by its successor Cecilius Calvert to be an asylum for persecuted fellow-Romanists, until through difficulty in securing recruits, a welcome was extended to all such as could not "conform in all particulars to the several laws of England relating to Religion." To this policy of religious toleration the settlement of Maryland for approximately twenty years was due.[6] Without the guarantee that the use of reproachful "nicknames" should be made a penal offense, Charles Calvert, years afterward, maintained that the province had never been planted.[7] The distinctive features in Pennsylvania history, for its first half century, are largely the resultant of its peopling by miscellaneous religious sects attracted to its borders by the guarantee of the first "Fundamental," whereby every one residing therein "should enjoy the free possession of his or her faith and exercise of worship towards God in such way and manner as everyone in conscience shall believe." The "Great Achievement" of the Pilgrim colony in thwarting starvation and acquiring economic independence when abandoned by the London Adventurers, was the triumph of a company controlled by men and women who refused to take the chance of having their children absorbed into the prosperous environment of Leyden, with the consequent extinction of their distinctive type of Separatist church. And the success of the Pilgrims in establishing themselves at

[5] See Brown, "Genesis of the United States," Vol. I, p. 273.
[6] On all the issue see Channing, "A History of the United States," Vol. I, p. 241 f.
[7] Maryland Archives, Proceedings of Council, 1667-1687, p. 267.

Plymouth without the bounty of a king or the subsidies of a Trading Company, probably went far toward encouraging the actual launching of the great emigration to Massachusetts Bay.[8] This does not imply, however, that the motive of Puritan colonization at Massachusetts Bay was economic. It may help to explain, of course, why a relatively small proportion of the male population of Massachusetts Bay of the period 1630-40 was sufficiently Puritan in its interest to join the church.[9] But then, as always, history was made not by the multitudes who joined, so much as by the leaders who conceived, initiated and guided the enterprise. And the latter were not the middle class of embarrassed fortunes, bent on securing land in an uncolonized country. On the contrary they were men of modest means, whose complaint was raised against church corruption, of the dislodgment of which in England they despaired. For them, hope of a rejuvenated church lay in a beginning *de novo* amid the conditions provided only by a newly established colony. From a material standpoint they had little or nothing to gain; culturally and socially they had much to lose. Strong of heart, they proved equal to the sacrifice. New England history, whether it be of the Plymouth colony or of the Massachusetts Bay emigration, is concerned in the beginning, and for a considerable period, with the heroic enterprise of religionists set upon the firm establishment of cherished church ideals.

In small areas of seventeenth-century colonial settlement, religion admittedly played only a negligible rôle. For certain sections its influence unquestionably has been overrated. Nevertheless, in the large, American colonization, with all its splendid daring, enterprise, and endurance, owes more to the motivating power of religion than

[8] On this Great Experiment and its bearing upon the Massachusetts Colony, see Usher's recent book, "The Pilgrims and their History," Chaps. XII, XIII.

[9] The latest estimate of the numbers who between 1630-40 had church membership is 4,000 out of a population of 65,000.

to any other single impulse. To the discomfort and economic hardships imposed by religious intolerance, the colonies are indebted for a large proportion of the citizens, who, schooled amid the religious disabilities of European countries, naturally acquired force of character, tenacity of conviction, and intense appreciation of religious values. Some of these people *had* to come to America. Ostracized and impoverished, there was for them little alternative. Some of them *chose* to come in the hope of establishing a new order better than the old. But whatever the urge, these were the men and women who because of their robustness and virility could not fail to give to American colonial life many of the characteristics that have made the history of that period so full of interest.

Unfortunately, some of these early religionists brought to America that from which they fled in Europe—the spirit of persecution. Having left friends and crossed the seas in order to establish a church in harmony with their views of the Word of God, they did not propose to have their cherished church economy undermined by conflicting theological opinions or idealistic views of liberty. They reasoned that along the unappropriated shore line and in the untrodden hinterland there was abundant room for such as found their "Way of the Churches" straightened, to choose one more to their liking. Roger Williams was, therefore, ordered to leave Massachusetts Bay. A like fate befell Anne Hutchinson and her more than score of troublesome admirers. Williams was probably more or less of a crank, and as the protagonist of an unpopular cause, his lack of tact was most regrettable. His personal failings, however, should not obscure the greatness of his vision. He it was who perceived that in the new western world the long standing problem of dealing with variant religious opinions was not to be solved by applying the European principle of territorialism, but rather by insisting that the State has no prerogative whatever in matters relating to religion. He could not, therefore, be satisfied

with confining this "experiment" to Rhode Island. His emissaries carried Baptist teachings into the neighborhood of Boston, in due time paying by fines and stripes the penalty of their temerity. Rhode Island, refusing to forego protection to Quakers, oppressed by Massachusetts legislation, found herself under threat of boycott by the New England Confederation, and obstructed by Puritan diplomatic intrigue in her negotiations to secure a royal charter. Baptist churches in and about Boston encountered persistent opposition in their efforts to secure houses of worship. At length successful, they encountered parish laws requiring them to support preaching repugnant to their own religious views.

In Virginia, where Anglicanism perpetuated the arrogance and careless conventionalism of the English parish régime, Presbyterians shared with Baptists the indignity of having their ministers subordinated to the Episcopalian clergy. Galling restrictions were thrown around the issuance of licenses for religious assemblage. Impositions of fines and distraint of property attended their refusal to submit to parish-law inequality and injustice. A vigorous struggle it proved to be, sustained by no ostentatious display of sham grievances, nor waged in defense of idealistic vagaries or fanatical overstrainings of supersensitive consciences. These were the remonstrants, Baptists no less than Presbyterians, who in chivalrous rivalry played the patriot's part in the military crisis of the Revolution, took no unfair advantage of the disturbed political situation, gratefully received such concessions as came their way, yet never for a moment were confused as to the real objective toward which they pressed. To be sure, these heroic idealists had a measure of good fortune on their side. From the time that the Great Awakening in the flood tide of its evangelical passion had submerged parish boundaries, the parish system, though later emerging with the subsidence of the revival, was sapped of its vigor and doomed to disintegration. Moreover, in the atmosphere

of revolutionary discussion, men's thought was carried far beyond narrow political aspects of freedom. The anomalousness of persecution and religious disabilities was bound to be increasingly apparent to revolutionists engaged in a life-and-death struggle to win their political independence. It developed, therefore, that taking good fortune by the hand, while at the same time in petition and memorial setting forth the true character of religion and liberty, making timely exposure of their grievances, and exercising their franchise decisively in critical elections, Virginian Baptists and Presbyterians with the coöperation of New England Baptists and Quakers, reaping the fruit of a century-long struggle, succeeded in having incorporated into the Federal Constitution the Amendment that guaranteed to Americans the full rights of citizenship irrespective of their religious opinions or church affiliations.

It would have been a dismal eclipse in the religious history of America, if after serving as a powerful motive in its colonization, and lending occasion for America first among the nations to solve the long standing problem of a harmonious relation of Church and State, religion was to find no correspondingly heroic task after a successful Revolution had issued in the status of independent nationhood.

Such, however, was not to be. The task was ready—urgently ready, and abundantly large for churches that fortunately had been feeling the benefit of a widespread series of revival quickenings. The westward movement of the people had already set in, and streams of emigration were soon to broaden into mighty rivers. But the circuit rider had already arisen—Wesley's greatest contribution to American evangelism. Compared with the leaders of colonial days—Bradford, Endicott, Cotton, the Mathers, Hooker, Edwards, Muhlenberg, Witherspoon, Davies, and even Eliot, the Mayhews, Brainerd, and the Tennent brothers, contrasts are greater than resemblances. Many

of them unschooled, and practically all unconcerned about the abstractions of theology, they were the prototypes of a new era of American religious chivalry. Hurling defiance at the materialism of the frontier, they followed the backwoodsman to his cabin. There, if only for a night or for a meal, they left the benediction of prayer, of a few comments upon some passage of the Scriptures, and perhaps of a tract, reviving the hallowing memories of the church of childhood days, and pointing out, perchance, the moral and spiritual hazards of backwoods life. Renouncing for weeks and perhaps for months the companionship of wife and the caresses of children, if not indeed, for their work's sake voluntarily choosing the unmarried state, these men oft found their hospitality in Nature's chamber under the shadows of hurtling rocks or heavy forests, falling asleep, perchance wet and unfed, with far too little assurance that before morning the Indian might not be glorying in their scalp. Sometimes there was a bright spot—the camp meeting, with wagons bearing the happy companies to the religious festival of the year, with its songs, its shouts of triumph, and its converts prostrated beneath the glory of new-found Grace. This was all heartening to lonely messengers, who spent the most of their days chafing under the sickening inadequacy of their forces to cope with the challenging religious opportunity of the New West. The Conference, to be sure, was a welcome retreat. Its additions to memberships, the establishment of new circuits, the forthcoming of promising probationers, the kindly greeting and approval of presiding elders and bishops—these were the steadying forces that kept the circuit rider year after year upon his wearying path, until at length, broken in health, stranded in material resources, or determined to give his children a modicum of schooling, he retired to the farm, restlessly biding the months until the time of Conference. In retirement or in his saddle, death found him boldly proclaiming the duty of the East to christianize the West, and tri-

umphantly prophesying that some day the task would be accomplished.

But Methodism with its circuit rider has no exclusive honor in this splendid adventure of christianizing the western outposts. Such names as David Bacon, Joseph Badger, Thomas Cleland, John Gano, John Mason Peck, Daniel McCoy, John Clark, Jackson Kemper, David Tuttle, Ezra Fisher, Frederick Braga, John McLoughlin, J. DeSmet are reminiscent of the worthy coöperation of Congregationalists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Disciples, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Romanists, not to mention an array of smaller bodies. Indeed, it is not at all certain that the circuit rider represents frontier evangelism in the zenith of devotion. The connectional system of Methodism threw around its circuit riders a measure of corporate protection. There was a guarantee, though small, of a stipend in the form of quarterage, some protection to wife and children, and an allowance for books. The missionaries of bodies other than the Methodists did not all have as substantial assurances of support and protection. Not a few of them were thrown entirely upon their own resources and compelled to interrupt their ministry among the churches by recourse periodically to some secular calling in order to replenish their finances. Handicapped thus by the inconveniences of travel and the necessity of providing the necessaries of life through independent secular pursuits, circuit riders and missionary evangelists were able to keep alive the torch of the gospel in the darkest recesses of the newly settled West.

It is regrettable that up to the present time so little has been accomplished by the various religious bodies to set forth in biographic form a fitting tribute to the noble men and women who laid the church foundations of the middle and farther West. The Methodists have made a good beginning. They have enriched our religious literature with the diaries, autobiographies and biographies of several of their bishops who labored abundantly for the new

settlements—Asbury, McKendrie, Andrews, Emory, Hedding, Soule. Biographies and autobiographies have also set forth several of their more distinguished circuit riders—Garrettson, Watters, Lee, Cartwright, Bronson, George Peck, Gavett, Luther Lee, Hobart. "Sketches and Incidents" pay slight tribute to other riders of the plains. Histories, local and general, of Methodism lift from complete obscurity the names of some preachers, who in their day did much to keep religion alive among frontiersmen. But denominations other than the Methodist have been singularly forgetful of their heroes of yesterday. Even Presbyterianism, with its fine literary traditions and its high regard for its builders of the past, has been strangely negligent in the matter of laying literary tribute upon the memories of their denominational founders of the West. Scarcely a single worthy biography exists. In the histories of presbyteries and of local churches, there are biographical sketches and personal references more or less colorless. But the few scanty references to the men, whose devotion and vision lay behind the achievements of Presbyterianism in the vast range of the American West, are almost lost amid the details of overtures, reports and statistics.

The Baptists and Congregationalists have shown only a slightly keener appreciation of their frontier heroes. Although the biographies of Joseph Badger (1851), and John M. Peck (1864) quickened the denominational spirit and missionary fervor of these two bodies, it does not seem to have suggested the wisdom of greatly enlarging, as could easily have been done, their biographical literature. Even Roman Catholics have been remiss in this aspect of their history. Father DeSmet, one of the finest exponents of missionary devotion and statesmanship, has not yet attracted the attention of a capable biographer.

Methodism has already begun to reap the harvest of its chivalrous regard for the lives of its circuit riders. The average American citizen has a fairly clear idea of who the

circuit rider was and how much he did for the uplift of our mid-western civilization. But of the frontier preachers of the non-Methodist bodies, there is at most only a scant knowledge, and this not because these preachers were of less significance to the development of American society, but because the records have fallen into the keeping of less appreciative custodians. With its missionary and Sunday-school libraries well stored with the stirring biographies of its pioneer preachers, it is not at all surprising that the Methodists have come into the possession of a vigorous denominational consciousness, and that they find themselves able to undertake a gigantic program of far-reaching social constructiveness requiring years for realization.

In the interests, therefore, not of sectarianism, but of an aggressive American Christianity, there is a challenge to the students of local church history to devote themselves to the much neglected records of local churches, to the files of religious newspapers, and to the reminiscences of surviving octogenarians, with a view to reviving and retaining the story of the last hundred years of our frontier history. The preachers who played a conspicuous rôle in the religious drama of a great age are in danger of being lost in the memories of the Church of today for lack of an appreciative biographical interest.

But the rescue of their names from oblivion will not in itself bring back to the mind of the present generation the full proportion of the church's undertaking when it confronted the christianizing of frontier life. The itinerant ministers were by no means alone in bearing the brunt of sacrifice and disheartening progress. Religion was a motive in the westward movement of many people. Numbers of small sects made their way to the undeveloped West to protect themselves against the leavening pressure of what seemed to them worldly modes of thinking and living.[10]

It is true, of course, that cheap and fertile land unsettled a vastly larger proportion of those who trekked beyond the

[10] *Supra*, p. 85.

mountains. Yet religion was not ignored. Occasionally a church community moved *en bloc* to the frontier, and not infrequently the minister was included in the company. These, with many who individually made their way to the new settlements, were the ones who were willing to prolong the inconveniences and discomforts of cabins, if only a preaching house thereby could be earlier provided, and the maintenance of the minister. Long distances in uncomfortable wagons over the roughest of trails, and the gloomiest interior and scantiest equipment of churches did not dampen the ardor of earnest folk, who believed that religion at all costs should be imbedded in the foundations of the society rising about them. Unable ofttimes to secure a preacher, and subject to the financial setbacks incidental to pioneer life, these people waited long, perhaps, indeed, for a generation, for something that might be an approximate substitute for the church environment that they had enjoyed in the East. And what shall be said of the even more splendid courage with which, while homes and churches were far from comfortable and attractive, the urgency of education imposed upon these same builders the rearing of a college where their boys and girls might be religiously nurtured and pulpit recruits secured and trained?

While circuit riders were braving the dangers and privations of the backwoods, and small groups of church folks were making heroic efforts to maintain a Sunday-school, to pay the preacher, and to provide for the building of a meeting house, throughout the churches of the East there was fast developing a manly sense of spiritual responsibility to the West. What courage it took to face the problems of a frontier broadened hundreds of miles with each decade! Where were the preachers to come from for stations increased each year by hundreds? How was the money to be provided for missionary allowances, church edifices, and colleges? Only men of rare faith and courage could calmly face such a situation. It helped, of course,

that in the nature of the case, the immensity of this project could be revealed only little by little. A sudden revelation of its full implications would have overwhelmed the strongest and most heroic. But as the task was unfolded, it found a constituency equal to each emergency—colleges of the East ready to send entire graduating classes to the new settlements, ministers eager to sacrifice the congeniality of cultured and wealthy congregations for the contacts of religiously famishing communities of the West, and contributors, seized with the principles of Christian stewardship, glad to give to the point of genuine sacrifice.[11]

How interesting, from the periodicals of the early half of the last century, it is to follow the growing spirit of confidence with which the Eastern churches began to address themselves to each new and larger responsibility of the West—first, the feeling of hopelessness as seemingly overwhelming situations began to emerge; then, timid readiness to make a desperate fight against heavy odds; at last, buoyant faith to carry through the program—a schooling of half a century in which the churches were gradually discovering their resources and placing themselves in psychological readiness to assume the burdens of the Christian socialization of human society. Because it is to be remembered that this was the period when Foreign Missions were beginning to press the claims of the Orient upon the American churches. Two tremendous tasks, each insisting upon immediate response! And both were gallantly assumed by missionary statesmen and broad-minded churches who clearly realized that Home and Foreign

[11] The reader will find it a very interesting exercise to study the financial reports attached to the numbers of the *American Home Missionary*. These indicate how rapidly contributors multiplied, and how really substantial their gifts were. He will discover also from the literature of this period, a remarkable anticipation of all that is embodied in the Laymen's Missionary Movement of to-day. There are many instances of men in the fourth decade of the last century who realized that it was their task to make money for the propagation of the gospel just as it was the task of others to do the preaching.

Missions, far from being opposed to each other, prospered best when alike encouraged.

During the last hundred years, the American people have witnessed within the boundaries of this nation a phenomenal economic expansion. Rarely, if ever in history, has wealth of such enormous proportions been so rapidly accumulated—three hundred billions, according to the estimate of the economists. With such accessible resources of land, forests and water, there has been every incentive to the American citizen to engross himself exclusively in the getting of wealth. Materialism has had its opportunity. And it could easily have made shipwreck of our souls, leaving us with an immense acreage of developed soil, sky-scrapers piled with merchandise, factories equipped with the latest inventions, vaults glutted with gold, but with no æsthetic sense, no craving for intellectual refinements, and no spirit of adventure or sacrifice. Probably in each of these particulars, we have paid the price and lost considerable in the domain of spirit while acquiring so much in the realm of things and stuff. But how much greater would have been the loss if generations of frontier farmers and townsmen had not been concerned also in the spiritual realities symbolized by churches, schools and colleges! How effeminate, indeed, might our Christianity have become, without the responsibility of establishing Christian institutions commensurate with our economic advance. Who more than the home missionary, fresh from the adventure and hardships of the frontier, was the hero listened to by religious conventions and local church congregations in the East?[12] How many hundreds of preachers received their call to the service of the church through hearing or reading the correspondence of frontier missionaries? The foreign missionary, it is true, made his contribution. He thrilled his audiences when on furlough, he described the benighted condition of the

[12] See the correspondence of John M. Peck on this point, showing the tremendous ovations that he received in New York and Boston.

distant Orient. His correspondence also had a constituency of readers. But the home missionary of the West was nearer—contacts with the frontier more numerous. They could scarce be avoided. Such disposition, therefore, as our churches today possess to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ is undoubtedly in no small measure a spiritual heritage coming down to us from the adventure and devotion of the frontier period just closing.

Today has its tasks for American Christianity. If the frontier has been churched perhaps to excess, and colleges in sufficiently large numbers established, problems even more complicated growing out of the urbanizing of our population are now calling for solution. The country, moreover, no longer conventional in its attitude to the Sabbath and to the church, is calling for a more vital expression of religion. Internationalism presents its challenge, and war-reconstruction its pressing issues. With such tasks committed to the churches, the spirit of heroism need not die. Great economic expansion undoubtedly lies before the American nation, and correspondingly grave dangers to its spiritual life from the blighting influence usually associated with vast materialistic acquisition. Hope lies in the fact that the task before American churches today is just as large as it was a hundred years ago, and the challenge of the heroic has not lost its power. What is supremely needed is an exposition of the bigness of the task that confronts the American churches. The heroic will do the rest.

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